













**COLLECTOR'S LUCK IN ENGLAND**







*"A New Love Song only ha' penny a piece"*

Plate II of the "Cries of London," painted by F. Wheatley, R.A., and  
engraved by A. Cardon, 1796.

# COLLECTOR'S LUCK IN ENGLAND

*By*

ALICE VAN LEER CARRICK



*With Illustrations*

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## DEDICATION

*To all my English friends in books, to all my English friends in life! And to my dear "Honest Collectors": Ethel and Will, Gib and Bea, Cora and William Rufus, Marcella and George and Reggie and Madeleine, I dedicate this tale of my adventures.*



To  
ALL READERS OF THIS DISCOURSE  
but especially to  
THE HONEST COLLECTOR

WHILE my collecting adventures were appearing in the *House Beautiful* a friend sent me a gently protesting letter. "We are enjoying your experiences hugely," she wrote, "but, oh, my dear, you don't *love* England as you do France." Perhaps not, although I think it would be fairer to put it this way. For France I have a passion, a romantic first love that, I believe, will always make it come next to America in my heart; and for England I feel the deep affection I would for some close kinsman with whom I might differ (indeed, I'm very sure I should!) but whom I thoroughly esteem. And yet, do you know, ever since I have been home, I have known that a part of me belongs to England as it never could to France. Because it is my inheritance. Do you remember what Beck wrote in his *Key of Dreams*? "I shut my eyes and see the cottage gardens, purple-velveted with the pretty paunce, and an old woman in a sunbonnet, tending her pansy beds, and picking a bunch for Sunday with a sprig of lad's love to give it savour? I suppose it never could be the same to a foreigner, however well he knew it. I sometimes think that the queer subconscious memory of old, old England is the strongest bond between us and the Americans — their mother's womb as well as ours, and the cottage gardens and deep green lanes more than statesmen and parliaments."

It really is so. Shakespeare and Chaucer, King Arthur

and his Round Table, the old legends which are like sapphire, pearl, and rich embroidery, and all the dancing elves and fairies that, alas, we didn't carry along in the Mayflower, why, they are *our* heritage, too. Our foremothers brought these precious, intangible heirlooms over with them just as they did the sweet-smelling herbs and the fragrant flowers that they planted in their wilderness gardens as a cure for homesickness. Amongst them I'm sure was rosemary — and that's for remembrance, you know. And I claim a further bond, for I have been seized of England! I think I shall never forget quite how it happened, nor the soft September afternoon when we journeyed by char-à-banc to Glastonbury. The sky was dappled with drifting clouds; every now and again little furtive spatters of rain emphasized the fact that we were in England, and we were listening intently to the laying down of historical law by our somewhat dictatorial guide, when, slowly, along the empty, level road that leads to Avalon, came a carter, his wagon heaped high with turf, the very first that I had ever seen. We stopped him, and he gave us two thick brown squares, our honest seizin, and I felt — well, perhaps a little bit like Una and Dan: “free to come and go, and look and know.”

In all the world there can be nothing more gently beautiful than this island kingdom, never too far from the sea. I love it all the more because of that; the ocean is in my blood. For grandeur of prospect I have never cared; it is too coldly remote; and magnificence is rarely an endearing quality. I love the levels, not the heights, and the English countryside, falling as it does into a succession of charming, quiet pictures, one after the other, completely contents me. Perhaps it's because the old, old

houses look as if they had grown straight out of the earth; nowhere else have I seen architecture so well related to the terrain, nor tranquil gray towns that so suggest the "continuation and outgrowth of nature." In comparison, once I was back in New England all the small white villages seemed to be trying their best to stand on tiptoe. And succeeding! And yet I adore them; like Struthers Burt, I want to admire nationally that I may sympathize internationally, for "the lover of the Pennsylvania hills is a lover of the Devon cliffs and the little blue valleys of the Seine."

And then books! Not a subconscious memory, naturally, but a close-binding cord of affection none the less. Almost all my favorite novels are English, stories that I read and re-read many times a year: *Henry Esmond*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Cranford*, *Puck of Pook's Hill*, *Alice in Wonderland*, and *Plasher's Mead* — these are just some of them. And here my chosen heroes and heroines live: Elizabeth Bennett, and the incomparable Beatrix, and Darcy, and Mr. Pickwick, and Jane Eyre, and Harry Warrington. Their fancied backgrounds have always fascinated me, and whenever I went antique-ing I used to pretend that *maybe* I was buying something that had belonged to them. Think how enchanting it would be to find the very candlestick that Beatrix carried down the great staircase that night when she put on her silver-clocked scarlet stockings for Harry, or, at some country sale, to stumble upon a suave eighteenth-century chair from the small summer breakfast parlor at Rosings! They should have honored housing in my next-to-nothing cottage. I constantly insist, you know, that English furniture and English accessories fall in most becomingly with

your own American four walls; you rarely — except in peasant pieces — can achieve the same sense of fitness with Continental decorations. Give me Louis Fifteenth's terrifyingly ornate desk, encrusted with ormolu and medallions, and you'll make an unhappy woman of me. Offer me George the Second's scrutoire, and I'll live its protestant to be forever. That's the difference!

Of course I never found these treasures of my willing fantasy, and of course I must admit I suffered other minor disappointments. I came all too late for the cuckoo and nightingale; I did not, as I had firmly intended, taste those celebrated dainties of Sussex, a Shelsey cockle, a Chichester lobster, an Arundel mullet, and an Amerley trout; and I searched in vain for my honest ale-house "with lavender in the windows, and twenty ballads stuck about the wall." And nobody quoted *Alice* the way they do in English novels, or wanted to talk about Jane Austen — nobody save that blessed pair, the B——s, whom I met at Bibury; and we spent one glorious evening before a ruddy fire, battling over the merits of their favorite, *Emma*, and mine, *Pride and Prejudice*. Indeed, I got my worst shock at Winchester itself, when, as I was departing for the cathedral, laden with a sheaf of roses for my idol's grave, an Englishwoman said to me, "And who was this Miss Austen that you seem so interested in? Was she an American lady?"

And as for Bibury, that sweetest village of the Cotswolds, so gray with age, so mellow with time past that, instinctively, you expect the laborers to appear in smocks and all the little lasses to drop curtsies and the lads to look like Kate Greenaway pictures, why, here the men and women wore what rural New England calls "store

clothes.” And when Alicia and J—— H—— walked abroad, the small fry did n’t “bob” a respectful and friendly greeting; no, indeed — they threw stones! Still, in recompense, Bibury boasts a gardening rector who, in his gentle abstraction, reminds me of dear Mr. Grey in *Plasher’s Mead*, and, besides, the B——s and I have made plans for a rustic revival: morris dances on the green, you know, archaic costumes, and small girls trotting along with pats of butter in neat wicker baskets, à la Red Riding Hood, who should say, as they stopped to be chucked under the chin, “Rest you merry, mistress,” or “Give you good den, kind sir.”

Constantly, constantly, I have to struggle with myself not to want to keep England in the Middle Ages — struggle with my æsthetic inclinations, I mean, for if I lived here my political conscience tells me I should be voting with the Left Wing of the Liberal Party. At Ventnor I read that dreary, wretched book, *The Annals of the Poor*, and when I looked at Little Jane’s cottage, most picturesquely restored and never as she could have known it, when I perused the tablet setting forth the virtues of the Dairyman’s Daughter, and comprehended the tragic barrenness of those lives, no comfort on earth and only the beckoning vision of a distant Paradise to console them, I felt thankful for all the movies and char-à-bancs and noisy, happy crowds that desolated my tranquillity. And Hannah More! If her bed is in Heaven, — which I very much doubt! — I hope it isn’t an easy one. I’d make her punishment fit her crime. I’d put her in a hut with a leaky thatch, — don’t I know how it can *pour* on Salisbury Plain? — give her cheery dinners of potatoes and salt, dole out occasional shillings accompanied by thrifty

advice, and let the complacent Mr. Johnson<sup>1</sup> admonish her on the "wicked, nonsensical notion of equality."

And the moral of all this, as the Duchess would say? Well, I think perhaps it's to realize how rich England is, how much she has to offer you; to marvel at the pag-eant of her past, and to return thanks for the marching spirit of her present. And, when you collect, to think not only of these symbols of bygone days, but also what these symbols signify. You must understand that they are just so much tangible history, folk history, if you like, but nevertheless real and valuable. I know a woman — a charming creature, too — who, when the lust of antique-ing is upon her, would not stop to enter the most magnificent cathedral or visit the loveliest manor house. And that's all wrong; you should care for the setting as well as the jewel itself. I love my old oak knife-box all the more because it came from a tiny shop nestled at the foot of William of Malmesbury's great Abbey, and my eighteenth-century barometer delights me for the thought of all the Wiltshire farmers that must have looked at its silvered dial, and tapped it, and wondered about the weather. A favorite philosophy of mine, and one that I preach incessantly, I know; but if you can feel this inspiration, if, on your quests, you can gather memories and backgrounds, beguiling legend and truthful fact, you will be the Honest Collector to whom this, my simple discourse, is admiringly addressed.

ALICE VAN LEER CARRICK

<sup>1</sup>Not honest Samuel; *he* knew what poverty was, and did not commend it.

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for the Tourist Third; I wish you could have seen the wistful First Class stealing down from their marble magnificences to join our simpler revels.) And you will perceive that I do not lightly boast of our nautical prowess when I tell you that Alicia won three prizes, and that I was chairman of the entertainment committee. I cannot realize that only two years ago all we longed for was a swift and merciful death!

I begin to be proud, too, of my ability to book my seats and manage my luggage (please observe that I am acquiring the proper English terms for traveling), and I have n't once lost my way or missed my connections — an achievement, I must confess, not at all difficult on the little Isle of Wight, where the train service is fairly good, and the busses run everywhere. Before, when we were here, I cast all my responsibilities, financial and otherwise, on my husband's capable shoulders, and he, poor man, with five of us, must have felt as if he had a Cook's Tour in tow. Now I am on my own, and my character develops under necessity.

The money is getting easier, thank Heaven! I can't tell you how many times I have said to myself, hurriedly and whispering, "Four farthings make a penny, twelve pence make a shilling, twenty shillings make a pound." Even then it has taken me several days to feel real familiarity with half a crown and a guinea. Talk about a universal language being the basis of world friendliness! I'm sure a universal cur-

rency would do far more for a genuine understanding. I've discussed this with the young man at the bank who always cashes my American Express cheques, and together we have evolved a theory that when British currency was first established people must have had six fingers instead of five, though just when or how the extra ones were lost in the process of development we have not yet discovered.

Of course there have been difficulties; I have puzzled the clerks at the post office by demanding "penny-and-a-half" stamps instead of asking for "three-ha'penny" ones, and coming over in the ferry to Cowes I had an almost embarrassing experience with the toll-keeper. I could n't seem to get the right change, and he was so very severe, and he said "Tut, tut, tut" so crossly, that I would have given — well, at least a florin, to say something witty and utterly crushing. But unfortunately reproach, not repartee, sprang to my lips, and I had just time to lean out of the cab as we dashed across and call out in bitter tones, "You wait till you come to America, and then you'll be quite as stupid about our money as I am about yours!"

However, I must stop prattling of international finance, and thank you again for our comfortable quarters; they are all that you promised. We arrived, cold and rather tired, in time for tea, a real English tea with thin bread and butter, seedcake and jam, and as we sat enjoying it in our very Victorian

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parlor I felt as if I had dropped into a dozen English novels all at once. And when the next day, Sunday, we had a delicious dinner of chicken and boiled ham with vegetable marrows and potatoes, and, as dessert, a junket of cream and stewed apples, my literary dreams completely came true. For was n't it in *The Newcomes* that Ethel and Lady Ann and the sick little brother partook at seaside lodgings of just such wholesome British fare?<sup>1</sup> Indeed, even Alicia had a thrill when I reminded her that vegetable marrows were what the coy Mrs. Nickleby's lunatic lover used to hurl over the garden wall in token of his affection.

We are very pleasantly placed; Shamrock Cottage faces Prince's Green, you know, a most lovely situation, the blurred line of the Hampshire shore dim in the distance, and, between, The Solent, a gray-blue stretch of water, always dotted with sails, and every day or so magnificent with one of the great steamers sweeping grandly on to Southampton. The sunsets — when we get them — are glories of rose and gold; we have n't had many, for although we heard before we left America that the summer in England had been so hot that all the verdure was withered, when we got here we decided that a dry summer *must* mean when it rains only every other day. Still, I can't quarrel with the results; it is all unbelievably fresh and beautiful; the hedges of privet and laurel and box

<sup>1</sup> I am wrong; it was roast chicken with bread sauce and a batter pudding.

remind me of Victoria, — British Columbia, not the Queen, — and as for the wild fuchsias that seem to grow everywhere, shaking out their tassels of soft red and dusky violet for all wayfarers to admire, why, I have n't yet found words worthy to praise their colored charms.

And then who would stay at home for a little mizzling? We have n't! We've char-à-banc-ed to Ventnor, where we engaged lodgings for next week, — our bedroom windows give straight on the Channel, and we'll have a glorious view, — and to Blackgang, where we drank tea in a flowery garden high on a cliff, overlooking a deep chine purple with heather. Sea and sky banded our horizon; every prospect pleased us and only wasps were vile. There has been a fearful plague of them all over southern England this summer, and now, practised, I strive to lure them away from my tea by placing blobs of jam on the near-by trees. Miss D——'s method is to employ "a gallipot of treacle" — is n't that a pretty phrase? — for their enticement and undoing.

We have been to Carisbrooke, too; except for the rugged keep-steps I thought the castle rather a toy, and, even with its romantic memories of Charles the First, a decided disappointment after the ruined splendors of Chinon and Loches. Later we are going all around the Island; I want to get the feeling of the whole place, and besides, with the wonderful stories of collecting friends to beckon me on, I am anxious

to see what my luck is to be and where I am to find it. Miss D—— told me that there were no shops left at Cowes, although at East Cowes she thought there was a man who occasionally had antiques mixed in with his secondhand stock. Still, wherever I am, I always look; and yesterday, when I was shopping along the little crooked High Street, — at its narrowest I can jump across it in two bounds, — I saw a window full of new jewelry and old silver and heavy cameos, and I went in because I thought there might be a chance of some of those engaging thread-thin silver spoons I am forever needing for my tea table. Oh joy! That front shop was merely a prelude to a big auction room filled with lovely old furniture.

There were tables and chairs, and two tall peasant-clocks of oak with gayly painted dials, and vitrines ranged with Georgian silver and cut glass — ever so many things that I've been wanting for years and that somehow I've never chanced on in America. Straight as a homing pigeon I went to a roundabout chair, a sturdy eighteenth-century piece, rare enough anyhow and infinitely more to be desired because of the tall, completing comb. Alas, a dealer from Southampton had bought it only a few days before, and it was sitting there waiting to be crated and sent over to him. Let me describe it to you, this treasure that I lost by not taking an earlier steamer, and then you can better measure my grief at missing it. It was nearly four feet high, — that's from the comb, you



My roundabout chair, a sturdy eighteenth-century piece; in Island parlance a "barber's chair," but all the rarer for that necessary, completing comb.



know, — the legs straight and set cornerwise with an X stretcher joining them. The arms had a fine outward curve, the pierced splat resembled the ones you sometimes find on rush-seated chairs in New England, and the comb matched them in design. I smoothed my hand over the yew seat which years of waxing had rubbed to a mellow softness, and thought how fittingly a dull-blue cushion would become its golden tones, and knew that five pounds would never again buy anything that I wanted half so much.

There was an interesting pair of Directoire chairs, suave and slender, painted black, which I could have bought for the same price, but, fine as they were, I could n't set my heart upon them as I had on this lovable roundabout that some forgotten Island joiner had fashioned with homely skill. There were other interesting pieces as well: a big drop-leaf table made of black oak, that I could have had for three pounds; a fine old lantern, its copper frame pierced with hearts, for two guineas; and a graceful Pembroke table for four. This last I bought for consolation — not that I really need it, although it will look very well in my Hepplewhite bedroom just under the picture of Horace Walpole. It is rather like the two Pembrokes Louise got at Oxford; however, the leaves are straight, not curving, and the mahogany lighter in tone. The marquetry is charming: on the top a half-inch band of satinwood outlined with ebony and

holly, and a string inlay of holly on the legs and drawers. If ever I have the leisure to play invalid and breakfast in my room, it will make a most comfortable table to pull up in front of my fire, for, with the leaves outstretched, it is two feet and eleven inches by two feet seven and a half. I must go in to-morrow to see about having it packed and sent off to London; this afternoon I am dashing off to Newport for tea with friends, and I mean to go early enough to look up the antiquity shops there. Forgive me if I seem abrupt. Rose, our pleasant maid, has just tapped at the door to tell me that luncheon is served, and "the little Missy" waiting downstairs. I must fly!

*August 28*

Tuesday I spent such an interesting afternoon. The B——'s have a delightful house on the High Street, built, I fancy, a century ago for some prosperous merchant who wanted to keep an assiduous eye on his shop. They have restored it with a real feeling for the past, and the spacious rooms and the wide, curving stairway are very attractive. But best of all is the walled garden that opens out directly from the dining-room: green turf and flagged walks bordered with flowers, and a grape arbor at the end; until you look up at the clustering slate roofs, you forget that you are in the heart of a bustling market town.

I had a lot of luck, too, for I found a little jumbled-



A graceful Pembroke table inlaid with holly, ebony, and satinwood.



up shop — groceries on one side, secondhand furniture on the other — just across the street from the old Grammar School where Charles the First met the Parliamentary Commissioners. An accommodating girl was in charge, and she let me explore to my heart's content, climb over chairs, and generally pull things about. First I found a pair of candlesticks, the telescope kind; they were eighteen and six — rather less than five dollars, you see — and, apart from the fact that the type is unusual even in England, they are an excellent pair, seven and a half inches tall, with domed bases and wide nozzles; dealers at home often ask more for just a single stick. There was a table, too, that tempted me; if I had any place at all to put it I should have bought it, for it was an early style, walnut with little flap-leaves that spread into an oval, something like a butterfly table, and the same X stretchers as the roundabout chair. I know I shall regret it when I am at home again, for I shall never find anything at once so charming and so cheap — only two pounds ten; just think of it! I plan to drop into this little shop often, for they turn their stock over quickly and they are always buying at local sales.

The next morning I went to Ryde, where Queen Mary shops, you remember. She, like myself, is a determined “antiquer,” though fortunately I believe her passion is for lustre, not silhouettes, which is luck for me. I have only praise for her discriminating

taste; the shop that she patronizes is very attractive, and kept by a descendant of John Field, that famous profilist of the early nineteenth century. I was delighted to have a chance to examine at first hand a collection of his silhouettes, the examples Mrs. Nevil-Jackson has used for illustration in her book, and to reassure myself on a point I have often heard disputed. I am more than ever convinced that the real excellence of the gilding on these profiles should be credited to Miers, the other member of the firm. I got nothing here, not because the furniture was too high — on the contrary, the prices, from an American point of view, were reasonable, and some of the furniture really beautiful; I could have bought a satin-wood card-table for six guineas. It was just that none of it fitted into my faience house.

I discovered another shop also, not so well known, however, and devoted to bibelots rather than furniture. There was not much that I wanted, and on the whole the prices were prohibitive, but I did pick up a little lustre cup and saucer for you, an appropriate gift, since, more than anybody else in Hanover, you two symbolize teacup entertainment. It is naïvely amusing, this Faith, Hope, and Charity design; Louise has one like it, I know, and I have always thought the soft purples and roses and the little dashes of blue very captivating. You must esteem it for what it is, not for what I paid, the small sum of seven and sixpence. And I found a tea caddy as well, a



The telescope candlesticks found at Newport in the little jumbled-up shop.



very Empire piece, shaped like a small sarcophagus, beautifully bound with brass, the boxes gilt, not silver, and, what was rarest of all, a cut-glass sugar-bowl in the centre. It was only thirty shillings, and I would have carried it off at once but for the unfortunate fact that I had just express cheques with me, and going out to cash them would have meant being deplorably late for luncheon. So I told the kind lady to put both cup and caddy aside for me, promising to call for them after I settled at Ventnor, where we go in a day or two.

To-morrow I char-à-banc all around the Island. Wish me luck!

*August 29*

I had it! At Shanklin in the Old Village, where we stopped an hour and a half, allowing us plenty of time for a leisurely lunch and then a stroll down the Chine and a climb up the cliffs. At least, I'd have been able to do all these things if I had n't first walked into the most fascinating shop I yet have found on the Island. I meant to look in just for a little moment, but I stayed so long that the moments turned into half hours, and so all I had to sustain life was a glass of milk and a package of ham sandwiches, which I devoured later in the char-à-banc. But it was worth it. I found more silhouettes than I have seen for years, good, bad, and indifferent hanging together, and I was permitted to take them down and compare

them carefully. At last I chose a pair, delicately painted, touched with gold, and set in square black frames — the sort, you know, that have an inner band of gilt, and a brass oak-leaf cluster to hang them by. And who do you think they were, this precious pair that I bought for twenty-five shillings? No less than the great Staffordshire potter who made that radiant shell-bordered blue china, Enoch Wood, and his good lady, comely in cap and curls and ruff. On the back of each is Wood's own handwriting, faded and brown and done with long *S*'s — on his: "This likeness of Mr. Enoch Wood was taken by Mr. Raper's Pantograph, March 25, 1833, in the Seventy-fourth year of E. W.'s age. Born Jany 31, 1759. Enoch Wood. Burslem. 1833." On the other: "This is a good likeness of my Wife, taken by Mr. Raper, March 25, 1833, by means of a good Pantograph. She was Seventy four years of Age June the first last. Enoch Wood. Burslem. 1833." A loving couple, you see, grown placidly old together.

They glorified my day, and I further enriched it by getting a wooden salt-box for fifteen shillings. The callow attendant insisted it was Jacobean, but I am convinced that it must be Empire in date, for the alternate pieces of bird's-eye maple and mahogany are set in wedges just as they are in those veneered centre-tables. It is quite twelve inches in height, and even in the darkest domestic hours it will lend a lustre to my workaday kitchen. I think,



It is naively amusing, this Faith, Hope, and Charity design, and the soft purples and roses and little dashes of blue are very captivating.





Luck was with me at Shanklin where I walked into the most fascinating shop I yet have found on the Island.



too, you would like some little fashion-plates, the sweetest things, which I bought for sixpence. They quite diminish the charms of the *Godey* prints people are so fond of collecting at home, for they are much earlier — 1815 — and with a delicate prettiness that mid-Victorian fashions invariably lack. I believe I rather envy the dead and gone Englishwomen who copied their chic from the *Ladies' Magazine*.

Good night, both of you! I am terribly drowsy; the Island is a sleepy place, anyhow, and an eight-hour ride in the open air has n't tended to sharpen my slumbering wits. Besides, I must arise at dawn and pack, for we leave to-morrow morning.

*Ventnor, September 6*

We have been here over a week, and we love it! We motored from Cowes through gentle hamlets, each succeeding one prettier than the last, with Godshill and Yaverland Manor for climaxes. The high, chalky downs, crowned with green, are a pure delight, and the sweep of the sea from Shanklin to Ventnor is too beautiful for words. I now realize the fatal mistake I made in not anticipating Edward the First in his purchase of the Isle of Wight; it is worth even more than the six thousand marks he paid Isabella de Fortibus for it; I don't wonder her heirs tried to get it back! But I would n't be selfish with my beloved Island; I'd let the trippers — though I don't see why they are n't called "char-à-banc-ers" —

come to Newport and Ryde and Yarmouth; but the range of cliffs between Shanklin and The Needles I'd keep for myself. "Ye Kynge's Towne of Brading" should rest in peace until such time as I drove in my coach and four to disturb its quiet, and I'd live at Chale in the old Abbey Farm, a gray fourteenth-century structure with stone floors and stairs, fine Gothic doorways, and, what is very unusual hereabouts, a buttressed barn.

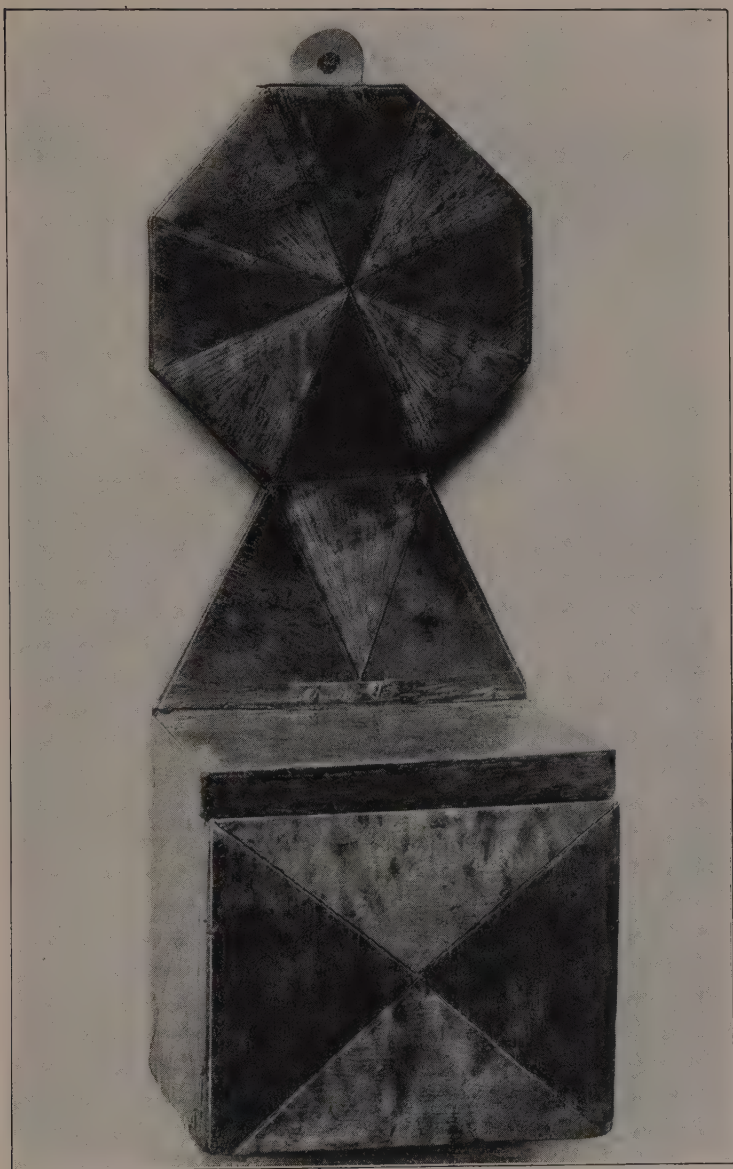
Chale, to my mind, is the most satisfying place on the whole Island, it's so exactly as it has been for centuries. Shanklin Old Village is oversophisticated, and even Godshill a bit self-conscious, while the ancient little inland towns, exquisite as are their settings, lie away from the sea, and always I want that. But to walk down the Blackgang road, high white cliffs behind you, blue water stretching ahead, to hear the bells ringing for evensong, and see, against the sunset, Chale church standing much as it did when it was consecrated by the Bishop of Winchester in eleven hundred and forty — well, I cannot wish any lover of the past a happier memory than this.

Still, it is all so beautiful — marvelous flowers; stonecrop growing out of the walls; geraniums and fuchsias climbing almost to the roofs; and in the gardens big dahlias, asters, roses, and multicolored begonias such as we never see at home. Each drive or walk is a fresh joy. I love the sheep-trimmed downs, the warm stubble-fields that poor Keats



Enoch Wood, the great Staffordshire potter, and his wife. The silhouettes were made by Mr. Raper's Pantograph, March 25, 1833.





The maple and mahogany salt-box which is destined to lend lustre to my workaday kitchen.



praised with wistful affection, the narrow lanes, and the high green hedgerows. Clouds of chaffinches fly out of the tall bushes at our approach, for the boughs are laden with blackberries, green and crimson and ripe growing all at once. There'll be no empty jam-pots on the Island this winter.

And then the small thatched cottages nestled against reddening orchards! If I were an architect I'd tramp, sketchbook in hand, all over the Isle of Wight, and make constant notes of the dormer windows, the little jutting porches, and the sloping roofs. There is great variety within this common type; the cottages are built of gray stone, and brick and plaster, even, infrequently, of wood. Occasionally you will find the first three materials employed together, and often these tiny cots are so mantled with ivy that you cannot see the original material for their verdant covering. Most of them claim a fifteenth-century origin, and there is one at Godshill that the oldest inhabitants say is a thousand years old, and have named "Noah's Ark" — on account of its age, I suppose, for it would just about house one middle-sized giraffe. There must be scores of these forgotten little cottages that visitors never notice, tucked away as they are in the remoter parts of the Island; the longer I stay the more I am convinced that the only way to value the Isle of Wight properly is to tramp through it. Char-à-bancs and motors are too tantalizing; they give you just a

glimpse. I mean to see it all some late May or early June before the trippers begin to desolate the land, walk till I'm tired, and stop at all the attractive wayside inns. They have such pleasant names: "The Hare and Hounds," "The Castle and Banner," "The Sportsman's Rest," and "The Traveler's Joy." These are just a few, but don't they sound delightful? Most of the houses, though, have high-sounding, ridiculous titles: "Fair Lawn," with a narrow pocket-handkerchief of green between front door and pavement; "High Cliff," at the top of an imperceptible slope; "The Hermitage," wedged in the middle of a stolid row. Ah well, an Englishman's house is his castle, and he jolly well calls it what he pleases!

Of course I've been collecting as well as tramping and *char-à-banc*-ing, and I've found four shops in Ventnor itself: two only so-so, the third a glory hole where you can find almost anything, and the fourth rather higgledy-piggledy, but full of real bargains. My first purchase here was a charming painted silhouette, the poised figure of Taglioni, whose graceful dancing ravished the hearts of our great-grandfathers, amateur work, no doubt, but drawn with easy, flowing lines. I have nothing quite like it in my collection, and it was cheap at eight shillings, especially since the dealer had framed it suitably in narrow black *passe-partout*. Since then I have acquired from this kindly old man a brass lion paper-weight, Empire, for six shillings, — I destine it for



The poised figure of Taglioni, a charming, painted silhouette, delicately drawn by some gifted amateur for a long-ago album.



your study desk, Will, — a *mignonne* little Victorian cardcase of papier-mâché, adorned with gay and pretty mother-of-pearl flowers, for ten shillings, — they 're beginning to be a vogue here, you know, and at grander shops you are frequently asked from twenty-five shillings to two pounds for them, — a valentine of the same date for eighteen pence, and for sixteen shillings a stunning copper urn, a fine George the Fourth pattern, over twelve inches tall and beautifully modeled.

But I have had one blow: when I went back to get my tea caddy and your cup and saucer, I found that the faithless woman had sold the caddy. Never again shall I bind myself to anything but bed and breakfast; if I had n't had to dash back to lunch I should n't have lost this treasure. Still, I can glimpse a brightness which may mean the silver lining to my particular cloud. Having the whole day on my hands, I decided to run over to Southampton and console myself with mail from home, a trip that naturally implied first Newport and then the boat from Cowes. You may be sure that, between busses, I stopped at the little jumbled-up shop to see what new-old things were fated to ensnare my eye and lighten my purse, and my trust was rewarded. I could have bought, for two pounds fifteen, another Pembroke table, not in quite so perfect condition as mine, but rather rarer, the tapering Hepplewhite legs ending in finely shaped spade-feet of brass, a

most unusual touch. And I did pick up a mahogany light-stand — this is literal, for I carried it to Cowes by bus and then walked up the High Street holding it in my arms, everybody who did n't know I was an American deeming me a madwoman. I think the base almost the prettiest I have ever seen, for from the knees down it is chamfered on either side, which gives it a decided delicacy, while the feet have a folded-back effect not often seen on New English tables of this general style. The seven and sixpence I paid was as balm to my wounded soul, and, best of all, when I took it to the auction rooms to have it packed, good Mr. N—— said, "I've been thinking about that angle chair you wanted so much. As a matter of argument, would you be willing to give the dealer, say, six pounds, and pay to have it brought back from Southampton?" Would I not? I jumped at the chance, and this white-souled squire of collecting dames is to let me know just as soon as he hears himself. I don't dare hope too much, but would n't it be wonderful if I got it?

I really must n't buy any more, however, difficult as it is going to be to refuse the many bargains I constantly see. My prudent self, too often dormant, counsels wisely, "Wait! You've weeks in England and Scotland, and what will you do if all your money is spent before you get there?" But the next time I do come to the Island it shall be in the spring, when all the auctions take place; collectors here tell me



The Victorian cardcase of *papier-mâché* adorned with mother-of-pearl flowers.





My Georgian copper urn, over twelve inches tall and finely modeled.



that treasures are to be picked up then for little or nothing. Frankly, I shall be glad of any excuse that brings me to this loveliest spot, which I have dubbed, in real affection, The Isle of Wight, Limited, because it is so blessedly easy to get around.

Alicia too has been very happy at Ventnor; the bathing is excellent, and she has found a pretty blonde English girl to tramp and swim and play tennis with, a companionship she very much appreciates, since all the children at Cowes were small — cunning things in short, frilly skirts, they looked precisely like illustrations in *Punch*. The weather has been more than fine: a hot sun, a cool breeze, and a sea like azure silk shot with silver. This afternoon it is so calm that it resembles a carpet of deepest blue stretching to the distant horizon, and even on the few stormy days we have had, when I took to my bed with a cold, I was happy just to lie there and watch the surf breaking on the white cliffs of Steep Hill Cove. How I shall miss it, once I am at home again and shut in by the mountains! I don't want to go to Heaven if "there shall be no more sea"; and I only hope the cathedrals will console me when I am at Winchester and Salisbury. We are leaving, most regretfully, in a few days, and I do want to thank you again for insisting that we should come here first of all.

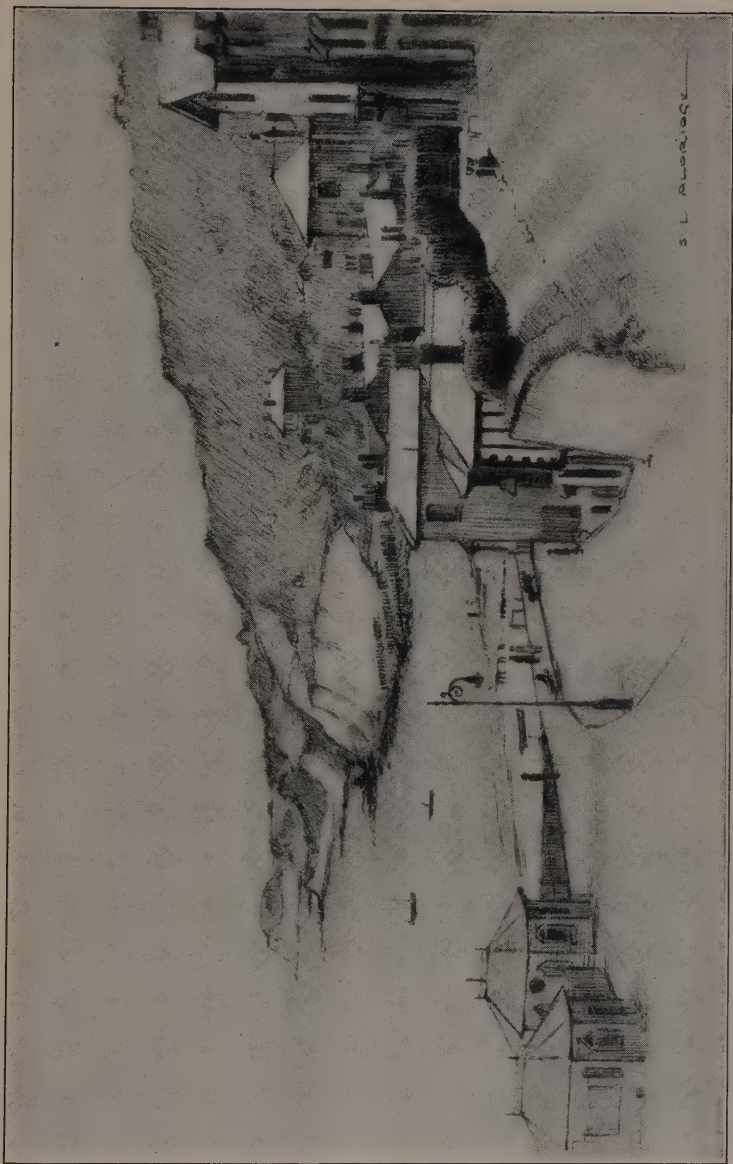
Yours most gratefully,

ALICE

## 42 COLLECTOR'S LUCK IN ENGLAND

P. S. Oh, joy! The roundabout chair is mine! I've just heard, and I could n't resist opening the letter to tell you. Already, in imagination, I have placed it a dozen different ways, but I *think* it's going to live in the parlor bedroom.

A.



VENTNOR, ISLE OF WIGHT

"I was happy just to be there, and watch the surf breaking on the white cliffs of Steep Hill Cove."



## II

### MINE EASE IN MINE INN

*Winchester, September 20, 1925*

DEAR GIB AND BEA, —

MY apologies and thanks, the thanks being for the pretty frillies you sent me for my steamer present, and the apologies for not sooner writing to tell you how much I shall enjoy wearing them at any grand affairs I attend. But, my dearest dears, I have been so joyously busy! Never think of Time as a hobbling old man, his gait impeded by hourglass and cumbering scythe. No, Time — my Time, anyhow — is a nimble youth with wings, and ever since we landed he has flown! Indeed, if you remember that blessed week three years ago in Boston, when we searched assiduously through all those beguiling antiquity shops and motored about the North Shore picking up chairs and tables and mirrors and counterpanes, you will forgive my silence. I've often thought of our junketing, and wished that we might do it again, but lately it's more than wishing: I've simply *ached* to have you here with me in England, this happy hunting-ground where there are more bargains than I can possibly carry away with me, and delightful things I'm sure you would love to have in the little house at Bexley.

Already I have bought one piece to add to its

charms, a copper warming-pan that I know your faithful Julia will polish to the rosy glow it deserves, although it is n't very big or very grand, just a middle-sized eighteenth-century warming-pan, lightly scratched in a star design, and with a well-turned oak handle. But it goes to you with a great deal of affection! I found it in a little odds-and-ends-y shop at the top of the town, a place where there was new furniture and old furniture, and where the prices were correspondingly small — a truth you will believe when I tell you that I paid eighteen and six for it. (I now am so expert in English money that I give the amount casually in shillings and sixpences like this, expecting you to unravel the financial fact that it is somewhat less than five dollars. Really, though, I *do* feel quite proud of myself; I have become such a complete mistress of the situation that I hardly ever confuse half crowns with two-shilling pieces.)

May I share my adventures with you? On paper, naturally, since you are in America, playing golf in California for all I know, while I am here in England with two more glorious months ahead of me. I feel as if I were turning the pages of some old chronicle as I sit here at the window of our comfortable sixteenth-century inn, a Tudor house, built in 1558 by one Alexander Nelson, and still beautiful with heavy oak beams and rafters and small-paned casements. But five hundred years earlier a sanctuary stood here, given to the Monastery of St. Swithun by Emma,

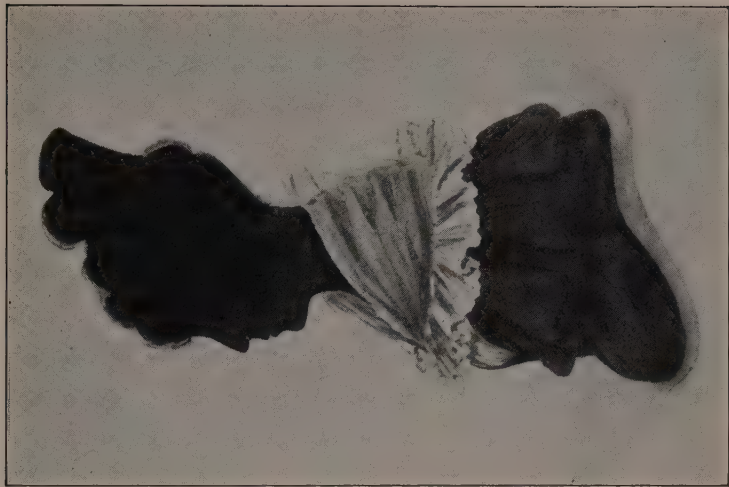
the lady of the burning ploughshares, widow of two kings and mother of two more, a merciful queen with mighty Winchester for her dower. And yet, even with all this pageant of the past marching in my mind, how shall I make clear to you, and calmly beautiful as it ought to be, this wonderful old city? It was an ancient town before the coming of King Arthur, whose Round Table — at least, they say it is his, and actually Caxton does mention it as a proof of the blameless King's existence — still hangs in the Great Hall of the Castle, a paltry eleventh-century structure built by the conquering William shortly after the Battle of Hastings.

Two years ago, when I was in Paris, I felt that pebbles tossed casually into the air would hit history; here I make no such effort: I have but to reach out my hand. I can lean from my window and blow kisses to good Queen Anne, whose plump figure adorns the old Guildhall; directly around the corner lodged Nell Gwyn, — King Charles, I may add, was discreetly visiting the Deanery, — and the High Street yet echoes with the tramp of soldiers just as it did when it was the *principia* and the Roman legions strode down its winding length. And there are memories too of Alfred; his dust was scattered to the winds of Heaven when Hyde Abbey was desecrated,<sup>1</sup> but

<sup>1</sup> William of Malmesbury in his *English Chronicle* mentions a legend, old even in his day, which relates that Alfred was first buried in the Cathedral, but that his ghost walked by night, so terrifying the canons that Edward, his son, was forced to have him reburied at Hyde Abbey.

a great statue towers magnificently near the London road, and in an humbler place, the fancied site of the swineherd's hut, a modest bakery bears the sign: KING ALFRED'S CAKES SOLD HERE, BUT NO BURNT ONES. The statue is new, of course, and the dreaming king may never have planned his campaigns beside the little running stream, but still I am glad that Winchester, his old capital, does not forget him.

As you may gather from all this, I have been roaming the streets. Such reminiscent names some of them keep even now: St. Peter's Street, Kingsgate Street, Jewry Street (the mediæval Ghetto must have stood there), and Parchment Street, where the scriveners probably lived, or at least purchased their writing-material. Apart from this pleasant flavor of the past, however, Parchment Street will always have an agreeable sound to me, for on it I bought some excellent silhouettes at a price which in no way detracted from their merit. I was n't terribly hopeful when I went in, so often I have been disappointed; profiles — which here they speak of by names all the way from "siloots" to "shilutes" — are getting rarer every day. I found three good examples in the Isle of Wight, but almost everywhere I have inquired there has been nothing. Still there were a great many desirable things in the shop, enough to encourage me to ask my accustomed question, the dealer answering, "It depends on whether you want classy ones or not. I've got some in an old scrapbook upstairs, and you



Two of my scrap-book profiles; the first, with its delicate, rosy ribband on the white lace cap, is almost worthy of Mrs. Beetham's brush.



can have a look if you like." I did like, for an ambition of mine has been to get hold of one of these old repositories of family history and personal taste, and, glory be, I found nine fine shadows: three little girls in modestly long dresses, two schoolboys wearing Eton collars, one well-featured gentleman, and three gracious ladies — a real find, I assure you, for masculine profiles are the common lot of the collector, and women and children, particularly children, are always difficult to achieve. All of them are painted, the women's shades with real delicacy; one of them, indeed, is almost worthy of Mrs. Beetham's brush. Never have I bought silhouettes so cheap; the whole book was mine for a pound! And on the same street, a little lower down, I picked up still another silhouette: a group, this time, painted in a green so dark as to be nearly black, softened with deeper shadowings, and very evidently a copy of one of Flaxman's classic designs. It is framed in a circle of dark mahogany, early Victorian, I should say, and far too heavy for the real grace of the composition. I think I shall take that off, though just how I shall re-frame it, goodness only knows. It is quite unique in my collecting experience, and well worth the twelve and six I paid for it.

Since this first fruitful day I have had no more silhouette luck, but lots of good fortune of other kinds. You know, in these ancient towns the shops are usually massed; where there are cathedrals there will antique-dealers be also; I sometimes wonder if the

old bishop-saints look down upon them, and, if they do, what they think of these modern miracle-workers. Winchester is no exception; there are four shops just before you pass into the Close, and here, I fancy, most tourists stop, few of these hurried travelers ever pausing long enough to understand a town, or to realize that there are other quarters. I myself nearly lost the chance of a lifetime just by disdaining a side street.

But that's such a climax I must save it for later; and first I'll tell you about a place up by the Westgate, where I found a valuable addition to my pressed-glass collection. On the whole, this pet glass of mine has been a disappointment, and I begin to despair of ever finding any cup plates — a mystery in such a tea-drinking country. I wandered in because the window looked interesting, — there was some beautiful rich blue Bristol there, — and discovered, to my delighted surprise, not a cup plate but a larger dish, five inches in diameter, lacy and delicate, and impressed with the heads of Victoria and Albert, their names above and a crown beneath. You know what such pieces are bringing in America! Well, this I got for twelve shillings — really somewhat less, for I bought two mugs besides, and all three together were only thirty-five. The mugs are good little things, a pleasant change, since usually they are so large that you are convinced of the heroic ale-quaffing bouts of a hundred years ago; those I pass by, my mugs being



The pressed-glass plate adorned with the heads of Victoria and Albert; their names above and a crown beneath.



for use, not ornament. Neither of mine is more than three and a quarter inches in height, and the larger one, buff-colored with a silver lustre rim and a decoration of lustre and vivid green on the sides, is a very comely piece. The other is quaint rather than pretty — Leeds-ware with a red-brown rim, and, enclosed in a wreath of oak leaves, jingling verses celebrating the “Friendly Society’s Feast,” a sort of town version of the “Farmer’s Arms” rhyme. I quote them because they are new to me, and I think they may be to you.

Come, come, Brother Members, both little and great,  
Who in friendship partake of our annual treat.  
While happy and cheerful we sit here and sing,  
Each Tradesman and Labourer’s blest as a King.  
Then attend to the health that with pleasure I give,  
May we ever a Friendly Society live!  
But altho’ we are happy in this our good Feast,  
Of the ends of our Meeting perhaps ’t is the least:  
To our praise be it said, ’t is by all understood,  
Our chief friendly Design is to meet and do good.

Dead and gone they are, these amicable revelers, but, judging from the size of the mug, they never met untimely ends by heavy drinking!

I was sorry not to find more of the mugs in the little shop that I almost passed by, but then, there was so much that I did want, I cannot lament so trifling a lack. I spent the most elastic fifteen dollars of my life — also some of the happiest moments. First I bought a table, a round mahogany tip-table, mellow and brown, a thing I’ve been wanting for years to hold extra teacups, not a large one, you know, but a

companionable piece with a top about twenty inches in diameter — this is twenty-two — and a slender, graceful, tripod base. Most of those you find are apt to be heavy and a little cumbersome, but this looks like the rectory parlor from which it came, and it shall have an honored place in mine. Twenty-five shillings was nothing at all for it. I blessed the chance that had taken me down the curve of the London Road, and I blessed too the heavy downpour of rain that kept me prisoner for nearly an hour, and gave me a chance to prowls around.

For it was n't an antiquity shop at all, but a second-hand dealer's: room after room piled high to the ceiling, and quantities of things that were worth getting. A pink lustre teapot, for instance, perfect, and only fifteen shillings; a pair of Empire chairs — all they needed was a little polishing — for a pound; scrod-dled-ware that some collectors at home are mad about, Victorian stools, and old faïence. You will be surprised at my moderation when I tell you that all I bought was the table, a tea caddy, a sugar box, two hyacinth vases, a Sunderland lustre plaque, and a pressed-glass sauce-dish. The caddy is so attractive I begin to be reconciled to the fact that I lost a larger and finer one in the Isle of Wight. It is made of thuya wood and mahogany with narrow lines of holly; a little diamond-shaped ivory escutcheon encloses the lock, small ivory knobs lift the tea-box lids, and the handles at either end, baskets of flowers with a ring,

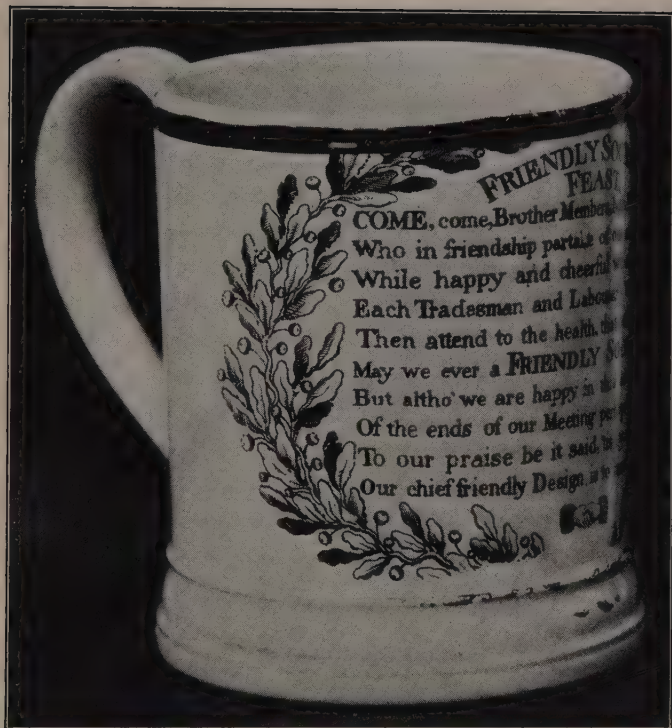


An eighteenth-century glass beer-mug that tempted me just as I was leaving Winchester.



The mug with silver lustre rim and decoration of silver lustre and vivid green.





“Dead and gone they are, these amicable revelers, but, judging from the size of the mug, they never met untimely ends by heavy drinking.”



mark the full Empire period. And it was half the price of the one at Ryde — just fifteen shillings.

The sugar box was even more of a bargain, two and



My Empire tea-caddy of mahogany and  
thuya, inlaid with narrow lines of holly.  
The brass handles, baskets of flowers with  
a ring, are very charming.

six; J—— at White River Junction asked me twenty times as much for a precisely similar piece. It is to adorn my kitchen; I have a lot of mocha-ware already, you remember, mugs and jugs and bowls, though only one other English piece and none so delightful as this, with its bands of soft blue against a creamy yellow background, and the moss-agate pattern delicately defined. The very naïve plaque is for Louise C——, a pendant for one she picked up at Oxford, though this, at seven and six, was the better bargain. Spotted Sunderland lustre with a brownish rim forms a wide band around it, while in the centre a gay wreath of flowers frames the words, “Thou God Seest Me,” and

from the two holes at the top I fancy such plaques must have been hung upon the wall by pious people, quite as a later generation employed worsted-worked cardboard texts.

As for my hyacinth vases, Bristol glass undoubtedly and of that full blue that an abundance of antimony gives, those I bought for seven shillings, a grate-



The mocha-ware sugar-box and the pious lustre plaque that I found at Winchester.

ful price to anybody who has ever looked for them in America. The last time I tried to buy a rather imperfect one at a tiny country shop, I was asked five dollars for it. And these are a pair, tall and gracefully shaped. I shall keep them, I think, on the mantel of my Hepplewhite bedroom and grow hyacinths next winter, for in one of my antiquated household books I have discovered a receipt for making these bulbs flourish. I'll write it down for you, if you like; and

if you like, too, I'll get you a pair of the vases; the woman had a number of others at about the same price.

Still, all these are small things, and my one really substantial purchase hereabouts was not made at Winchester but at Southampton, where Alicia and I went for our mail. I have n't been having it forwarded, you know, for I am never precisely certain where I am to be — one definite disadvantage of traveling in this fancy-free manner. We were starved for news from home, and when we found no letters waiting for us I tried to drown my grief, not in the nearest bar but in the nearest antiquity shop. I really had n't intended to buy anything but silhouettes, but when I found the kind of chair I've been seeking literally for years, why, I just could n't resist it, even though it was eight pounds ten and my funds were getting low — one of my longed-for letters having meant a most necessary bank-draft, you see. I dare say my friends will think I have a round-about-chair complex, for it is the second I have bought. But then it is quite different from the other: a soft brown walnut, much more refined and decidedly earlier, since the splats are solid and all four legs cabriole, ending in shapely Dutch feet. Even if I could get one at home, — which I very much doubt, — the price would be three or four times as much. And I could have done with two other angle chairs, — this seems to be the name in England, — one with

straight legs and cut-out splats, the other having a bandy leg and a Dutch foot in front, and both only four pounds ten. Indeed, my heart is constantly being wrung by having to relinquish treasures I know my friends at home would adore possessing.

Ah, Gib and Bea, can't I lure you to Winchester? The dealers here are the most interesting and amusing I have ever met; if I stayed long enough and had a talent for writing stories, I could do a second *Quinney's*. Indeed, Joseph Quinney did live at Southampton, I am told, and the novel was drawn from real life by clever Mr. Vachell. The most surprising tales I have heard: a marvelous Roman burial urn, now in the British Museum, that was found in an auctioneer's house by the dealer who sold me my silhouette scrap-book; adventures in country inns, a ventriloquist attached to a collecting cortège, so that the rustics might first be diverted, then persuaded into selling their heirlooms; prominent London dealers disguised as porters; paneled cupboards haunted by misers' ghosts — I've never listened to anything like them.

A few of the shopkeepers I don't fancy. I don't, for example, at all admire the man who, mistaking me for a wealthy and foolish American, — the nationality I proudly admit, but surely, *surely* the qualifying adjectives are undeserved, — tried to sell me a very inferior and incomplete set of pink lustre for ten guineas. Nor does my heart go out to the dealer, a fat and fulsome youth, who confused flattery with salesmanship.



The consoling angle chair that I bought at Southampton; the mellow walnut has lovely tones of gentle browns, rather like the color of old honey.

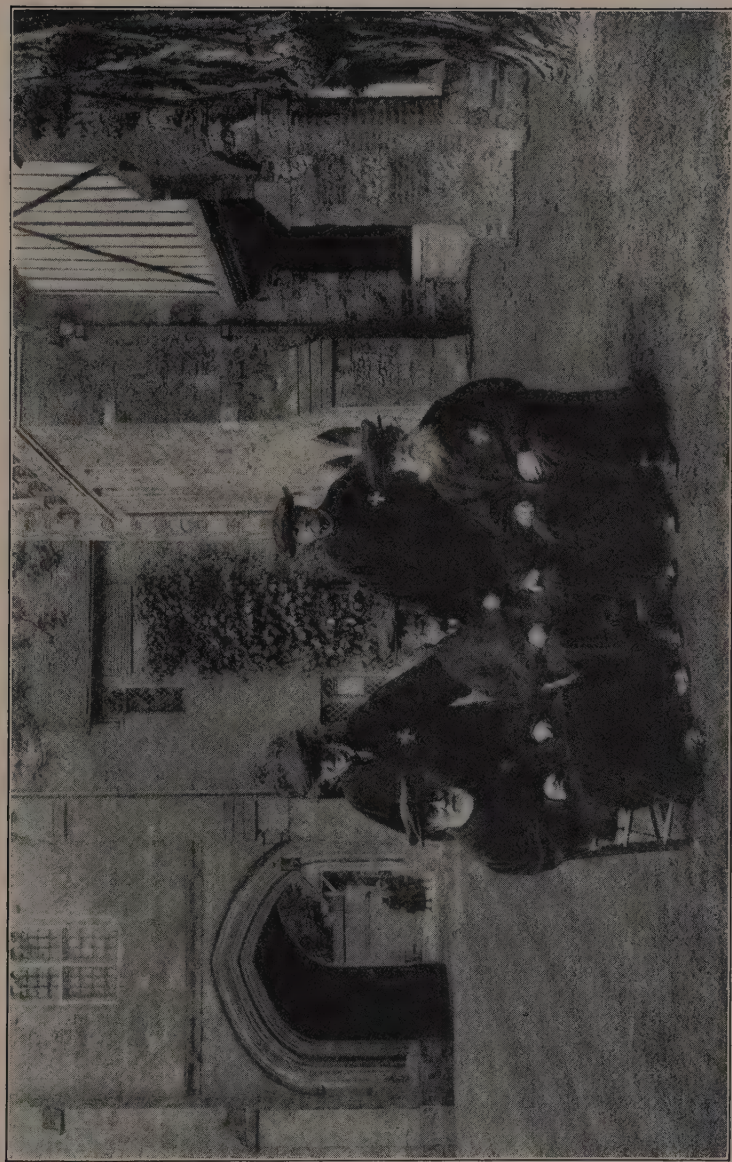


First he appealed to my vanity by remarking, "I always say that American ladies are a fine-looking lot. After all, what does the face matter? It's the style that counts." (I was particularly shabby that day.) Then, finding me still adamant, he praised my appreciation of the true, the good, the beautiful, in furniture, but all to no avail. I did n't buy a thing! Still, in compensation, there's the pleasantest dealer in all the world at Winchester, a gentle old man whose fortunes were broken by the war. Most of his collection has long since been sold, a remarkable one, too, that the *Connoisseur* thought worthy of a leading article, but he still has excellent things left, and he is most meticulously honest. I run in to chat with him almost every day, and he reads me his little grandson's letters about birds' eggs and school, and relates bygone legends of this ancient town, and tells me the tale of a Cavalier wraith who wanders by night through his seventeenth-century house. And if the day has been rainy and cold, — at times we have had dreary weather, — he invites me to sit beside his glowing coal-fire and drink a glass of sherry. I have promoted him to the rank of Favorite Dealer — favorite English dealer, anyhow.

Well, why should I wonder at Winchester being a collecting city? Here dwelt Bishop Henry of Blois, who, ardent lover of the classic sculptures he brought from Rome to adorn his many palaces, was one of the great cognoscenti of the early Middle Ages. A

great benefactor as well, for he founded the Hospital of St. Cross, a gracious charity in that troublous reign of Stephen when "it seemed as if Christ slept, and all His saints." You will love to walk out there across the water-meads, and if you go at the right time, — alas, I did n't, — you still may receive the Wayfarer's Dole of a horn of ale and a crust of bread. I was always either too early, and the porter's hatch was n't open, or too late, and it had been closed; but yet I return grateful thanks to Bishop Henry who established this noble almshouse and to Cardinal Beaufort who built the beautiful tower. I count myself fortunate to have seen it first upon its day of high festival, Holy Cross Day, in the late afternoon when the long shadows slanted athwart the soft greensward, and the old black-gowned pensioners strolled about by twos and threes or sat in the sun near their pretty, peaceful gardens. And you must stay as I did for evensong — the only time of the whole year, I was told, when the Brothers file into church together, and listen to a sermon preached for their especial benefit. It really is the most lovable, lovely place!

Bishop and Cardinal both are buried in the mighty cathedral, and here too are the tombs of Edward, son of Alfred; of Canute, and Emma, and William Rufus; of William of Wykeham, to whose wisdom England owes Winchester — or St. Mary's — College, the oldest of her public schools; while serene Izaak Walton lies in a chantry at the right of the



Old pensioners at St. Cross.



choir. But my pilgrimage was made to Jane Austen's grave; for years I've wanted to lay roses there, roses deepening from a flush of pink to deepest crimson, joyous colors to match that merry heart of hers, all untired by life's stiles. At first I thought I might have to get permission from the Dean and the whole Chapter; you will remember, perhaps, the difficulties some of our compatriots encountered a little while ago when they tried to place a wreath on Robert Burns's statue. It never had been done, and therefore it just could n't be! (Occasionally England reminds me of Sancho Panza, when he told Don Quixote that it was not right for His Honor to ask him to make new customs.) But all went well; I timidly confided my hopes to an obliging verger, and he quite beamed on me and said he wished I lived in Winchester.

I wish I did too; then, the weather graciously permitting, — which it does n't always, — I'd ramble through the countryside, for Hampshire is very lovely, and very like its namesake State at home, which naturally inclines my heart to it. And there is a house not many miles from here that some day I must see, for I have heard of it ever since I was a tiny child. The old ballad of "The Mistletoe Bough" was written about it, and the heavy oak chest in which the luckless young bride hid herself, never to be found till years and years had passed, still stands in a paneled cupboard in the hall. Ah, well, it has been there for generations, and I dare say it will

wait for me to come again; for this is the joy of England — even the greediest traveler in the world cannot devour it all at once. Char-à-banc-ers may desolate the land and whirring motors widen the country lanes, but even then old beauty will remain for all lovers of the past who choose to look for it.

My love to you both, and good night! Just a temporary farewell, however, for I am writing from Salisbury.

*Salisbury, September 26, 1925*

MY DEARS, —

How shall I ever be able to adjust myself to a mere eighteenth-century house, when for five happy days I have been living at an inn that was built in 1320? I am comfortable beyond comparison in this lofty solar chamber, a spacious room that would contain most of the ground floor of Webster Cottage, — well, anyhow, my parlor and my bedroom and the hall between, — and that rises surely as high as its “story’n’half” before it reaches the great oaken roof-tree. The Earl’s Chamber, it is called; tradition has it that Samuel Pepys once slept here, and then most characteristically complained of both bed and board.<sup>1</sup> His was a caviling soul, I am sure;

<sup>1</sup> What Pepys really recorded, June 10, 1667, was this: “Come to the George Inne, where lay in a silk bed; and very good diet.” But the next day he did resent the bill. “So home to dinner; and, that being done, paid the reckoning, which was so exorbitant, and particular in rate of my horses, and 7s. 6d. for bread and beer, that I was mad, and resolve to trouble the mistress about it, and get something for the poor; and come away in that humour.”

the bill I have n't yet received, and I *may* get a shock, but the bed is all I could wish, a great, square-testered four-poster, hung with blue curtains, and almost as soft and restful as beds are in France — the height of my praise. It is sheer luxury to lie there at night and watch the firelight flickering on the brown beams and rafters and burnishing the old mahogany furniture — later than the room, of course, but very agreeable to the eye: Chippendale chairs, and straight-front bureaux, and a big, round, tripod table for my books and papers. In the lounge there is the same sturdy beauty of bygone days, and the fine paneling and the carving on rafters and mantel of the withdrawing-room tempt me to break the Tenth Commandment.

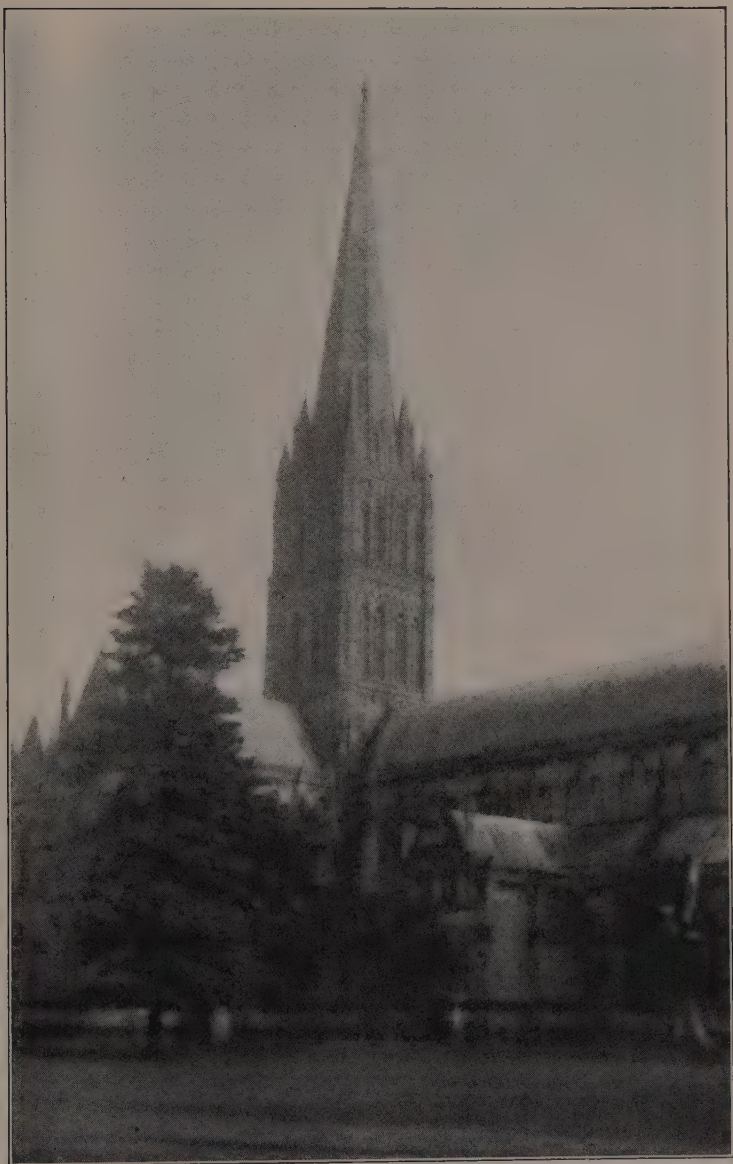
Indeed, the woodwork at Salisbury is remarkable; I don't wonder that guidebooks are so enthusiastic when they speak of the perfection of the domestic architecture. And I don't mean just the grand places that are starred, but the casual, unexpected glimpses that you get. Yesterday Alicia and I went in for tea at a little bakery near our hotel, and in the upper room where we were served, there was the surprise of stately paneled walls and a wonderful Tudor mantelpiece; some rich merchant must have ordered it to celebrate his success, for on it are carved the portraits of his family. Take it all in all, I really prefer Salisbury to Winchester — to live in, I mean. I like the canals that run through the streets, pretty, bridge-spanned streams that have bestowed upon the town

the name of the English Venice. Thomas Fuller in his ponderous *Worthies* quotes an epitaph — a *very* British one, I think — which bears out the comparison: —

Born in the English Venice, thou didst die,  
Dear Friend, in the Italian Salisbury.

And I love the Cathedral of Saint Mary, set in its green close, all those beautiful houses around it, and guarded by its great wall which was built from the stones of Old Sarum. Its sense of aspiration is more poignant than Winchester's; it is more the flight of a soul, although, it is true, the interior lacks the vast and ancient magnificence of St. Swithun's holy church. Incidentally — a matter of little moment save to a fond maternal heart — it is the first cathedral that Alicia has really cared for; she goes to see it quite unbidden, a very honest tribute from my small daughter.

As in Winchester, there is a cluster of antiquity shops near the Cathedral; you pass five of them just before you reach the High Street Gate. There are n't quite so many in the town itself, but, in recompense, the prices here are rather lower. Not that I've bought such a lot: two chairs, a set of Liverpool transferware with a delicate pink lustre spray design on the edge, a charming old color-print, and a very early eighteenth-century French map, the last two being presents; I just don't dare let my range of interests



**SALISBURY CATHEDRAL**

“Its sense of aspiration is more poignant than Winchester's; it is more the flight of a soul.”



get any wider than it is now. But I have seen a number of things that I would have liked to own if my purse and my house would obligingly expand to the ampler measures of my collecting affections. Chairs, for example! I saw five that I craved, and I bought only two. And tables! I could easily have added three to my heart and home, but, truly, if I get any more I'll simply have to hang them as a frieze on the wall, an unjustifiable bit of interior decoration, if you ask me. One of the chairs is for my kitchen, and I think you'll agree that it is a very grand one to sit on as I shell peas and peel potatoes, but then I expect to spend a good deal of my life doing such homely, everyday things, and anyhow I can't see why a kitchen should n't be as attractive as a parlor. It is made of yew — and yew is rare, you know; there are five slats with the reversed wave just as you get them in the Pennsylvania-Dutch country, and the legs are a straight-ish cabriole, well shaped as they join the rush seat, and ending in Dutch feet. Altogether it was a real bargain at thirty shillings, for all I shall have to do is to rub it up with wax, and there you are; the old seat is quite perfect. The other is larger and heavier and more expensive, — five shillings more, — an armchair with turned posts, and, what is rarest of all, a very early eighteenth-century spool-turning in the front stretchers and in the braces under the arms — a type I've frequently admired in the Essex Institute, and never hoped to possess.

But as prices go I suppose the tea set was the greatest triumph, and certainly it was a solace to my frugality after the awful price of the Winchester lustre: forty-five shillings for a teapot, a creamer, a slop bowl, six cups and saucers, and two plates — altogether, as the dealer told me, “eighteen pieces, counting the teapot lid.” I shall take one of the plates with me to try to match the pattern as I journey about, and if I can’t find a sugar bowl, why, one of my pressed-glass ones will go agreeably with it. As for the map and the color-print, they were ten shillings each. The print is for Isabel, just the thing for her to frame in old gilt and hang in her blue drawing-room. I hope she will realize my true devotion when she sees it; it will be a grief to part with this pretty, soft-hued “*Paysanne de Gueldre*.” The man had quantities more, and I could have bought every one of them with pleasure.

Don’t think, though, that I’ve done nothing but prowl in antique shops. We’ve been twice to the New Forest, and fallen utterly in love with Beaulieu (Bewley, if you please). The roads there are just what Alfred Noyes has called them — ribbons over the purple moor. To Highcliffe, too, for a last look at our dear Isle of Wight; it stood out so clear and close and beautiful, a *Fata Morgana* island of enchantment, that we felt as if we could almost touch it. And we journeyed to Bemerton to see saintly George Herbert’s old church and rectory, and visited Wilton

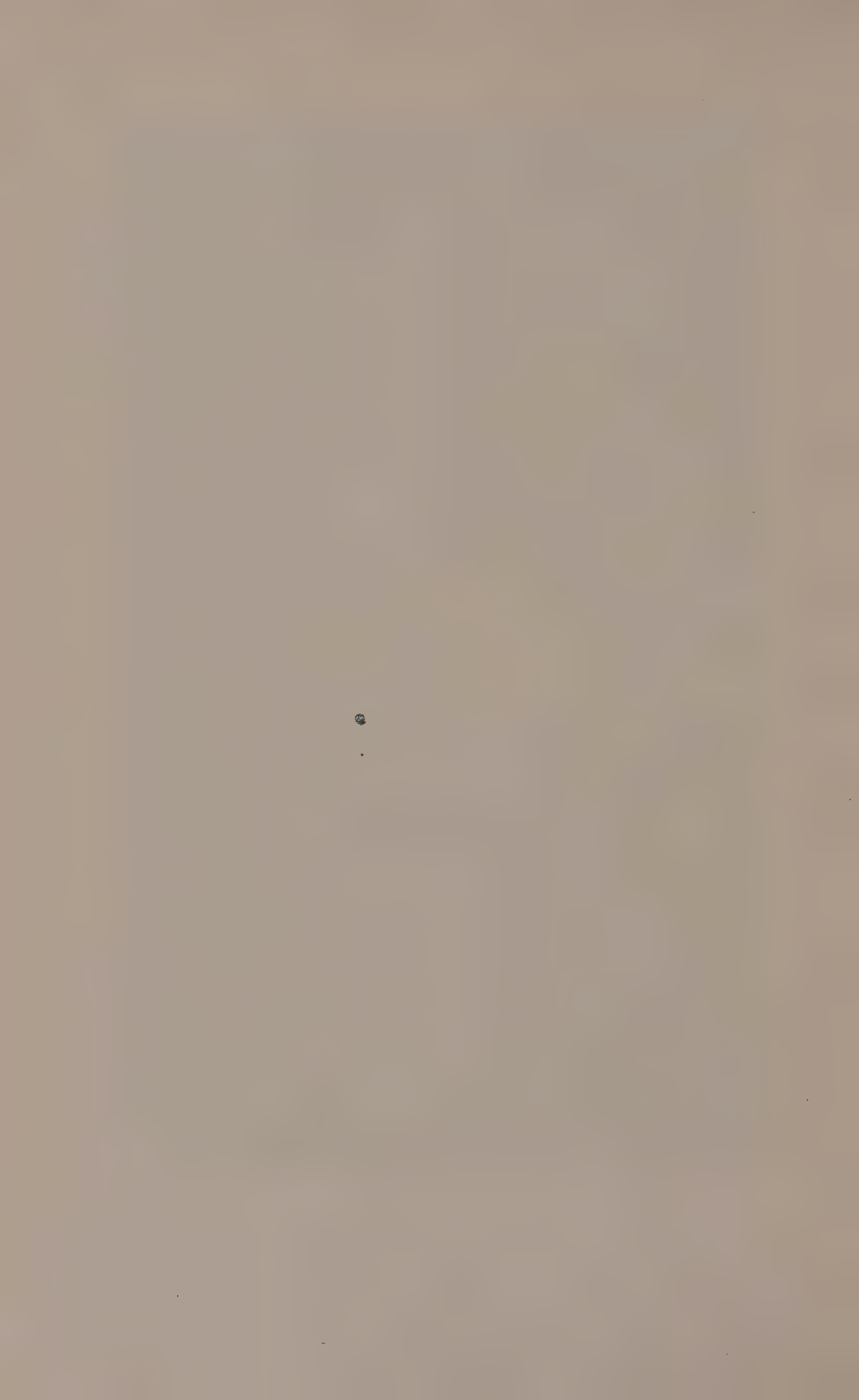


My yew chair with straight-ish cabriole legs and reversed-wave slats.





Liverpool transfer-ware with lilac lustre decorations; "eighteen pieces, counting the teapot lid."



Hall, where the incomparable Countess of Pembroke dwelt and Sir Philip Sidney wrote his *Arcadia*. It was our first glimpse of a great English house; really very beautiful, and the grounds beyond praise. I cannot tell which I prefer, the vista through the tall yew hedges to the distant spire of Salisbury, or Lely's portrait of Nell Gwyn — such a lovely Nelly, clad in russet silks to match her eyes. It is much more beautiful than the one at the Metropolitan Museum. Although we were there at lunch time, the family did n't seem in any way inconvenienced; I think I shall take pattern by their example, and after this show only the state apartments in Webster Cottage.

And of course we went to Stonehenge. In the most awful, pouring rain that I ever experienced, too; I wish you could have seen Alicia and myself running like hunted deer through the market place, round and round, in quest of the char-à-banc that was to take us there. Eventually it turned out that the trip had been called off, and so we got a motor and dashed away through the deluge. The driver, that we might better see the landscape, had obligingly omitted the side curtains, and we were drenched before we reached Salisbury Plain, so wet that getting out and walking about could n't add to our misery; and after all, since we did n't die of exposure, I really felt thankful for the weather that kept less hardy tourists away. It would have been appalling to have our first sight of

that ancient, solitary ruin blurred by a crowd of hurried trippers with tired, whimpering children in tow. And the glimpses we did catch of the villages were charming: prettier groups of cottages than in the Isle of Wight, I think, and here in Wiltshire they thatch even the high stone walls, — “cob walls,” I believe they call them, — a precaution I quite understand in so rainy a climate, use combined with beauty, for it assuredly gives a gentle, rounded effect that falls in most becomingly with the feeling of the countryside. I longed to stroke them!

Indeed, I am so enthusiastic that I could go on writing pages and pages but for the hampering necessity of packing. Alicia, as urban in her tastes as her father, insists that she will die if she does n't soon get to a real city. She would prefer London, I fancy, but we are off for Bath on the afternoon train.

Yours with affectionate sincerity,

ALICE

### III

## THE WEST COUNTRY

*Bibury, October 14, 1925*

DEAR CORA AND WILLIAM RUFUS, —

HERE I am where I longed to be: at Bibury, a little village, praised to me in such flattering phrases just before I sailed, that I made up my mind nothing short of battle, murder, and sudden death should keep me away from it. You must have memories of small gray Cotswold towns, where the gabled houses are covered thick with Virginia creepers and roofed with old hand-hewn stone tiles, houses that seem to have grown straight out of the earth, to have always been there. If you do recall such simple beauty, my dears, — and I know that you love this part of England, — you will understand how pleasant we are finding our remote little hamlet of six-hundred-odd souls, set in the green Gloucestershire hills, with a charming rivulet running along the village street, roses and Michaelmas daisies growing in every garden, and no chance at all of our peace being disturbed, since we are seven miles from any railway, and, Heaven be praised, the days of the char-à-banc-er have been numbered and laid away with the vanished summer.

We came here to rest for a time, both physically and financially; I have had a troublesome cold, — I

suppose I have been rushing about too much, — and also, like John Paston, “I am not well moneyed.” At Bibury I can be as tranquil as I please, sit by the fire and spin, or tramp idly through the countryside, for there are delightful, easy walks in all directions. And as for luxurious haunts where I can riot away my few remaining dollars, why, there is a grocer’s, a draper’s, a harness shop, and the post office — a general emporium where you can buy not only stamps but toys and note paper and picture postcards and peppermint bulls’-eyes. (Even this, I may add, is hermetically sealed on Thursday afternoons.)

And yet I do myself — or rather, my collecting chances — an injustice, for this very morning, at that same post office, I was offered a badly battered gate-legged table for four pounds, and this afternoon, when we were motoring over the hills to Chedworth and the Roman villa, we stumbled, by the chance of a wrong turning, upon a sale at a rural vicarage. The old incumbent had died a few weeks before, I was told, and while I think that the family must have kept most of the finer things, still there were treasures that, even in my indigence, I regretted having missed. I came all too late for the Sheffield candlesticks, the blue china, and the bits of old silver, but for fifty shillings I could have bought — and I would, too, if I were living in England — a tall late-Empire chest of drawers, beautiful “feathered” mahogany veneered on oak, and with well-carved, florid pillars;



One of the little streams that makes Bibury such a fisherman's paradise, and a row of Cotswold houses, gabled and steep-roofed, that has been sketched again and again by admiring artists.



and for sixty-eight shillings a swell-front bureau, mahogany as well, with graceful Hepplewhite feet, although there was no inlay as is usual on such pieces at home. Indeed, Cora, I have been surprised to see how comparatively little marquetry is used in either card tables or bureaus here. By the way, dealers stare at me when I speak of "bureaus"; the English term, it seems, is "chests of drawers," a bureau referring only to what we call a desk, or, at the furthest, a chest with a writing-drawer that lets down on quadrants. I am rapidly remaking my antique vocabulary: "Dutch feet" are called "pad feet"; "drop leaves" are "flap leaves"; while the splat in the back of a Chippendale chair is almost invariably referred to as a "banister."

Taking it all in all, however, the auction was not very different from our country sales at home: no dealers, but mainly farming folk, and one parson and his wife buying furniture for their own vicarage. The auctioneers were rather better dressed than our local ones, smarter and more practised, and then the catalogue — a thing we seldom see with us — announced that they came from such romantic places: Bourton-on-the-Water and Stow-on-the-Wold. Even though I bore no tangible memories away with me, I shall not easily forget my first English village sale. It was all so beautiful: a rolling autumn country with the beeches just beginning to bronze; clusters of little stone houses folded away in the hills; ploughmen

drawing long furrows across the good brown earth. And so much wild life — pheasants and partridges whirring up from the stubble fields, and rabbits playing in their warrens and popping over the road at our approach. You would n't have dreamed you were near any town.

Of course this village auction could n't compare with the really grand sale I went to at Bath; that was an epoch-making event in my life: Chippendale chairs and Pembroke tables, and mirrors and armor and a superlative Hepplewhite sideboard, the belongings of an old colonel who all his life had been a collector. I went to examine the things the day before — always a wise precaution, since I never like to buy a pig in a poke, and at an auction I'm apt to get excited and do it. And though I swore I was not going to get another table, I fell utterly in love with one, a small flap-leaf type with pad feet. (You see, I am learning my English lesson!) It was gracefully shaped, the wood a rich San Domingo mahogany, but what really urged on my desire was that the single flap made it an exceedingly rare piece; I have never seen an American table like it, and even in England they are unusual. I patted it fondly, and told it to wait for me, promising myself that I would go to five pounds for it, — furniture is n't anywhere nearly so expensive as with us, you know, — but when the sale began and I stood there in the crowd clutching my catalogue, faint with emotion and lack of air, I



A small flap-leaf mahogany table with pad feet. The single flap makes it a very rare piece.



began to realize that I had a competitor, no mean one either, unless you like to take the other significance of the word, for it was the Ring, that famous band of dealers you read about in books and magazine stories, which was bidding against me. The price soared to five pounds ten, and there I stopped, for I knew it was n't any use to go on. Ah, if only I had held my tongue and not been too ambitious! Late that afternoon, bewailing my lot, I went to one of the smaller shops where the owner was hunting up valentines for me, and he told me that, if I liked, at the knock-out sale that evening he would bid on the table for me and try to get it for ten shillings more. He was as good as his word, honest man, and the table was mine for six pounds, though if I had n't bid so high against the Ring I might have had it for five, I am sure.

Still, my dears, you ought to rejoice at my temporary despair. Normally I would have gone back to tea, — Bath buns, well buttered, are a weakness of mine, and they were particularly good at our hotel, — but when I came out of the auction room I sought oblivion in the antique shop next door, and found not only comfort for myself, but an enchanting little chair for you. It is too sweet! Black lacquer with little flourishes and knots of gilt, and small flowerets and diamond-points of mother-of-pearl decorating the back. The old cane is intact, and it has but one minor fault: *it won't do for William Rufus to sit on*, his stalwart frame being more adapted to the ampler

structure of oak chairs made when armor was in fashion. Really, Corrie, you will love it, even if it did cost only twenty-five shillings. Since I bought it I have seen several other chairs of this type, some of them four guineas apiece, but none with the delicate charm of yours. It is just the sort of thing you and Miss M—— rave about. And I think you'd like the shop where I found it; it is quite a special place, financed by the mayor of Bath and with all the profits going to disabled soldiers, a fact which gives you great confidence in buying there. Besides, there were ever so many bargains; I remember some excellent lustre very cheap indeed, and the chairs and tables are most reasonable. I rather fancy great ladies send in things to be sold for charity; anyhow I saw some engaging bits of old jewelry that, were I a vain woman, and did I not want to adorn my house more than I do myself, I might gladly have bought.

But I *am* curbing my instincts somewhat, even if I have broken another antique vow. I declared, you know, that I was n't going to let my tastes in small things stray away from glass and valentines and silhouettes, and here I am collecting mother-of-pearl cardcases. But they are so early-Victorian, so guilelessly pretty, so eloquent of our fastidious grandmothers, that I find I cannot resist them. And as yet they are so ridiculously cheap that it would be sheer folly not to indulge myself in this, my latest passion. They are just at the beginning of being a



An early nineteenth-century side chair: "black lacquer with little flourishes and knots of gilt, and small flowerets and diamond-points of mother-of-pearl."



collecting vogue, and two or three years from now we'll be paying five times as much. I got one at Ventnor, a black papier-mâché with a gay inlay of nacre flowers; and Bath added four to my collection,



A rosy pearl cardcase engraved with minute bouquets.

shimmering pinky-pearl beauties; they ran all the way from four shillings to seventeen and six. I am not sure which I prefer; the engraved ones were at once the dearest and the cheapest of the lot. The first, etched with minute bouquets, I bought at the shop

of the obliging dealer who got my table for me; the second, decorated with birds and scrolls, I found in a basket on the floor of what I like to call a "pokey" shop, because in such places it's such fun to poke and pry around and see what you can unearth for yourself. (I may add in passing that my investigating faith was further rewarded by a little scent-bottle of yellow pressed glass, that much-sought-for vaseline glass, you know, just what I have been needing for my Hepplewhite dressing-table; and case and bottle came to seven shillings and sixpence.)

The other two cardcases are blendings of light and dark pearl, a combination that gives an astonishingly brilliant appearance, though neither of these is so fine as one I have seen at home in Hanover; I still am looking for one as lovely, and set in the same alternate diamonds of opalescent rose and lustrous blue-green. But you see the owner wanted twenty dollars for it, and for none of mine have I paid even five; most of them actually have been a great deal less; the two with the dark edges and corners cost ten shillings for one, and fifteen shillings for the other. I am going to get as many as I can, and range them against a black velvet background, just as I have done with my cup plates. Think how resplendently they will shine! Think, too, how much I shall enjoy paying calls when I can have a different cardcase to take with me each time I sally forth on social pleasure bent. There is such variety in just this one simple

thing that, even in a whole drawerful, I shall not need to repeat myself. And, joy of joys, it is the first of my collecting tastes that Alicia has really shared.

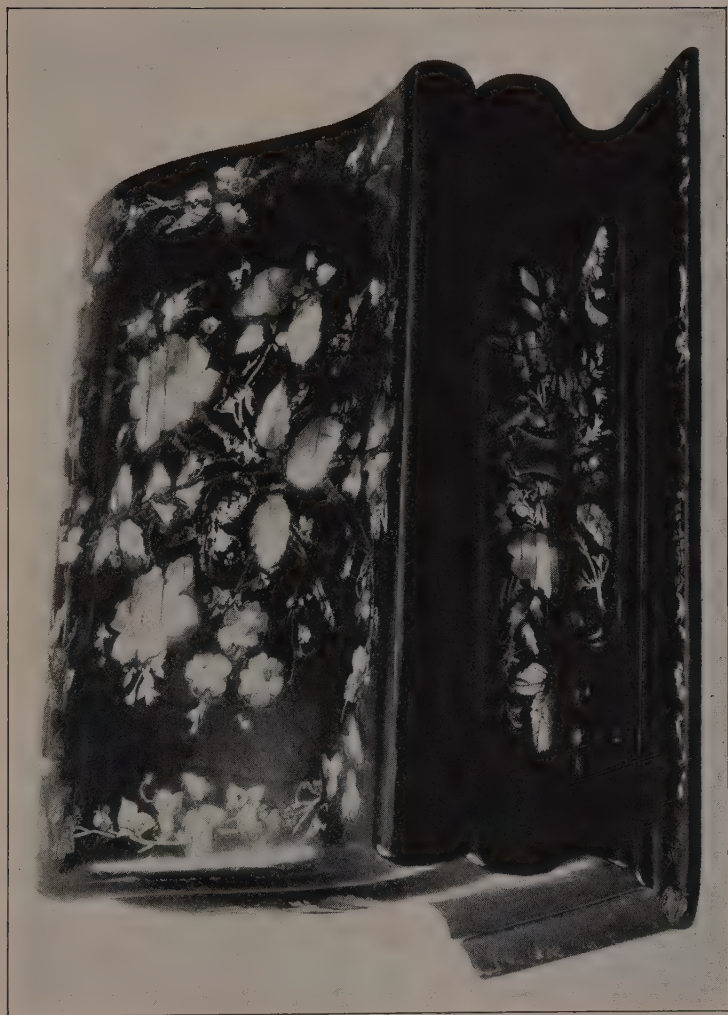


Really a combination purse and cardcase, for it opens at the side; the blending of dark and light pearl gives it a charming radiance.

She searches every shop for them now; polishes their iridescent facets, and pores over their beauty with such fervor that I have promised her she shall inherit my treasures when I, to use a childhood phrase of my family, "have gone up to be an angel." And

there'll be a lot more for her to "heir" if I keep on as I have begun, for this little heretical Victorian corner in my heart is spreading, and I have just laid out fifteen shillings on a papier-mâché stationery case, its compartments lined with red watered paper, and the top and sides patterned with mother-of-pearl flowers and leaves and arabesques of gilt. Naturally I don't dare let myself get any real furniture; it would n't at all suit my eighteenth-century background; but I do wish you could have had some of the pretty and inexpensive tables and chairs that I've been forced to refuse.

Let me see — what else did I buy in Bath? Oh yes, something for you, William Rufus, for you may consider the inlaid chair as belonging completely to Cora: four dear little Leeds-ware plates, and I paid seven and six for them. Strictly speaking, they began life as part of a doll's tea set, but still that's no reason why you can't amuse yourself with them as ash trays now; you can have one for each of the drawing-room tables. The paste is delicately clear, the rim a full, fine blue, otherwise I should n't dream of laying them at your admired feet. And I got a silhouette for the M——s — did you know they had gone to be proud and haughty presidential people at Skidmore College? — a whole-length painted profile in all the dignity of clerical robes; a trifle severe the gentleman is, but I think he will give tone to Henry M——'s study, and, since he looks ancestral, aid my friends in maintaining



A symbol of this little heretical Victorian corner in my heart, the papier-mâché pearl-inlaid writing-case.



discipline. Old gilt frame and all, the profile was only ten shillings, a sum that astonished me, for the dealer had others, unframed and quite amateurish in workmanship, for which he wanted nearly three times as much. Even in England, I am thankful to say, silhouettes are occasional "blind spots."

And I bought another chair, this time for my kitchen, a sturdy, comfortable, comely Windsor arm-chair with excellent turnings, a shapely bow underbracing, and a well-pierced, narrow splat, carved at the top with the initials, G. B. The splat is made of yew, but the rest of the chair is ash; just as with us you find this type made of several different woods. You find, too, that the type of Windsor we consider American was also made here, though these "stick-backs," as they call them, are far less graceful than our best examples. Don't reproach me when I tell you that I paid three pounds for my chair; after all, if I have a background of homely charm, my family will thrive upon my improved cuisine. Indeed, I only marvel at my restraint when I remember all the longed-for things I could have bought in this shop, an enticing place and the proper background for antiquities, for it once was the old tavern where Samuel Johnson stayed when he came to see the accomplished Mrs. Thrale. And parts of the structure are much more ancient; there are mediæval cellars and fireplaces, and a seventeenth-century smugglers' passage that used to run out to the river.

Really, it would take weeks to exhaust or even appreciate the collecting chances of Bath; there are more good shops and more honest, friendly dealers — barring the man who tried to sell me the most ordinary profiles as genuine examples of Miers' early work — than in any other city I know. One very knowledgeable man has been so kind; I go to him in all my perplexities, and I have gleaned whole sheaves of information from his long experience. A bit of it I confide to you now: an almost infallible way of testing whether brasses are old or new. If they are new, they move stiffly and with difficulty; if they are old, they swing easily up and down, years of usage having worn them smooth. Worth knowing, is n't it?

I felt, when I left Bath, as if I were just on the edge of understanding what was to be bought there; I could n't begin to go into all the shops, for always, as I motored or char-à-banc-ed about, new possibilities opened out before me. I am sure that if a Martian were suddenly dropped in this delightfulest city he would immediately assume that the chief industries were invalids and antiques. And he would be right; all the streets seem full of old ladies in wheel chairs, and the windows of even older bibelots. Some leisurely September, Cora, you and I must experience the pleasures of both; William Rufus can pretend that he is a Roman Consul, luxuriously taking the baths, a rejuvenating process in which we will join him; truly it does erase years from your age and lines

from your face; I saw women coming out quite fresh and blooming as a result. And then, strengthened for our arduous collecting toils, we will get him to give us a blank cheque, and stroll out and buy up Bath!

Seriously, I do want to go back again, and with you as my companions. Alma would adore it too, and if Bob was bored, why, we'd send him up to London. My warmest praises cannot make you understand what Bath means to me. I enjoyed the other places where I stayed; I admired their beauty; but it was in this gray, stately town that I first felt akin to England. It is more completely harmonious than any other place I have ever seen. Except for the great Abbey, erected shortly before the Reformation, it was almost entirely rebuilt in the eighteenth century, and the formal classicism of the Crescents, the Circus, and the Parades is admirable. I don't think it was just my joy in Jane Austen that made me so keenly appreciative, although I loved rambling about through Pultney Street and Laura Place and Camden Crescent, and found even a pleasure in realizing that the traffic was quite as much of a peril as when, over a hundred years ago, Catherine Moreland and Isabella Thorpe were stopped in Cheap Street by the press of gigs and carriages. Of course I loitered in the Pump Room and drank the waters, — atrocious, sulphury stuff, endurable only from the literary associations, — and, Heaven forgive me, I went to the lofty

Assembly Rooms, where Mrs. Dowler embellished the scene with her feathers and Lady Mary Carlisle queened it in beauty — to see a movie! But it offered an excuse, really to view a place I so often had visited in print, and the picture itself was very good — Sir Martin Harvey in “The Breed of the Treshams”; be sure to go if it comes to Chicago.

Alicia loved Bath just as much as I did, though I think its charms were enhanced by the fact that she found some young people of her own age at our hotel. An agreeable family it was, the kind you meet in English novels, you know: Mr. H——, a clergyman taking the waters for his rheumatism; his wife, so gentle and friendly, and three of their twelve children with them. One of the boys motored Alicia about and showed her the countryside, which is beautiful and historically rich; there are ever and ever so many rewarding drives you can take: to Bradford on Avon to see the little Saxon Church, the finest in all England; to Lacock Abbey, a mediæval-looking gray stone village, and its beautiful Tudor manor house built on the foundations of the old convent; to Glastonbury, where Joseph of Arimathæa’s holy thorn still blossoms at Christmastide, — so they say, — and to Wells Cathedral; its setting is almost as lovely as Salisbury’s, and, some day, some happy day, I’m going to stay in one of those ancient, vine-hung houses in that enchanting Vicar’s Close.

I really can’t tell you how sweet the H——s have

been to both of us. They insisted that we should visit them on our way to Gloucester, and when, the morning after my arrival, I inconsiderately came down with an attack of pleurisy, they surrounded me with the kindest, most thoughtful care. If anything could have made me enjoy poor health it would have been to lie there in bed and look out at the tranquil Wiltshire landscape: green lawns and tall trees, faintly colored with the first touch of frost, and the fourteenth-century tower of Garsdon church in the distance. And my doctor was a dear thing! (You know, William Rufus, I own to a weakness for the medical profession!) Moreover, being born and bred hereabouts, Dr. P——, when persuaded, could talk in the broadest dialect, and I learned to my delight that the word “boughten,” which old New England women still employ for a dress or a pattern not homemade, is just a survival from the mother country, where the rustics even now continue this archaic ending, and speak of “goosen” and “peasen” and “housen.”

Then, when I got better, we motored about a good bit. We went to Malmesbury, a place I have wanted to see for years because the wise and liberal William, second of England's great historians, carried on his “earthly warfare” there at the Abbey. And I may add the Abbey itself is well worth traveling many a mile to see. As I looked at the majestic pillars of the nave, at the great arches sweeping their vast curves against a hot blue sky, — the world was playing it

was summer again, — as I paused awhile to decipher that touching picture-book of the poor and lowly, the marvelous South Porch, carved with naïvely reverent sculptures of the Creation, the Deluge, and the Nativity, I felt how mighty the Abbey must have been in the days of its glory, second to none in the whole kingdom.

The little trifles I picked up in the antiquity shop, nestled at the foot of its tower, seemed very modern in comparison, yet they comprised a hard-paste Lowestoft cup and saucer, prettily sprigged with roses, for five shillings; a black snuffbox, inlaid with pewter and mother-of-pearl, for three shillings; and for ten shillings an oak knife-box about fourteen inches long, with a sliding cover, and a pierced handle to hang it on the wall. It's the sort of box collectors are buying for string and oddments of that sort, but I shall keep it for its original purpose, I think; it closes so tight that maybe I can keep my kitchen knives from going astray.

And we drove to Chippenham, a prosperous market town, but chiefly known to fame because it was here that Alfred signed his treaty with the vanquished Danes. I'd like to celebrate its worth on my own account, for one of the antique shops — the town has three — was cheaper than any I have yet seen in England. I just missed a whole set of chairs, the transition Hepplewhite I have been seeking to complete my blue-and-yellow room. They were simply and gracefully made, the splats were well pierced, and



My oak knife-box bought near the great tower of Malmesbury Abbey.



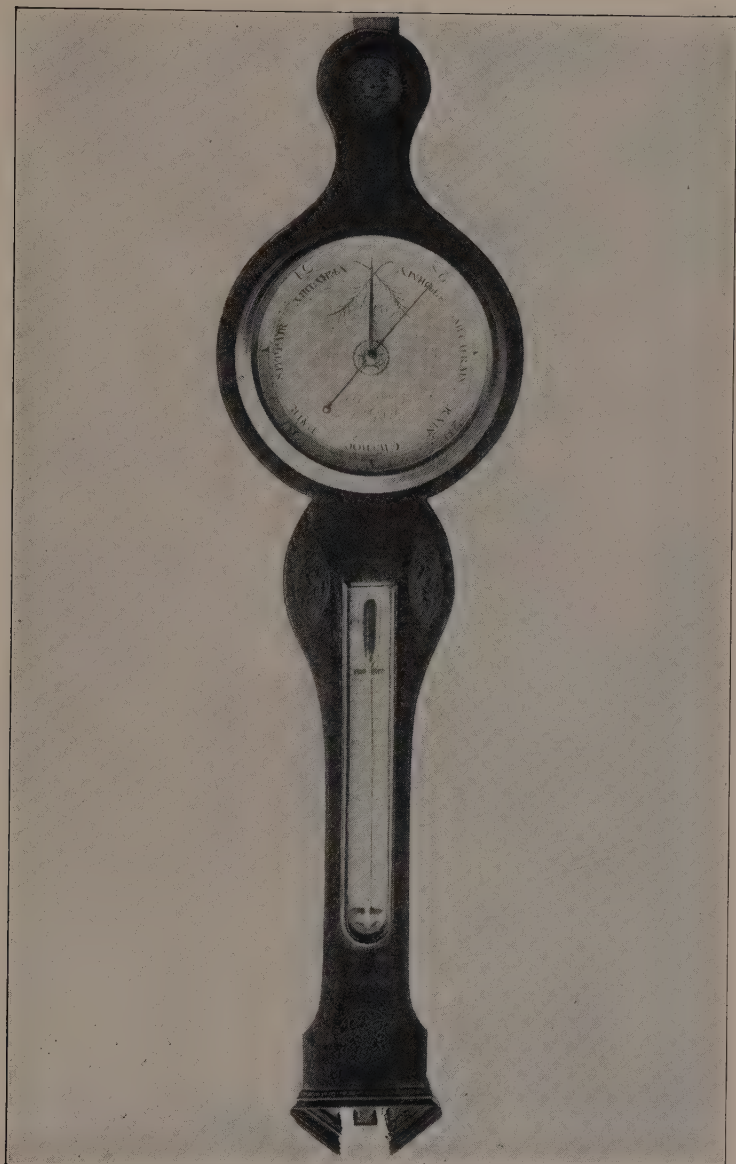
the tops showed an easy, flowing, shield-shaped curve. Even the wooden seats did them no disservice, especially since I could have bought them, if I had had the luck to come a few days earlier, for fifty-five shillings for the six — much less than I should be asked for a single chair of this type in New Hampshire.

My consolation was a three-guinea eighteenth-century barometer for Orde. Chairs and tables are commonplaces in his life and thrill him very little nowadays, but I can't imagine an antiquity that would please him more than this, the weather being one of his constant interests and a thermometer the chief of his diversions. It really is very attractive, mahogany inlaid with tulipwood and holly in a pattern of rosettes at the top and bottom, and shells — the sort of decoration you sometimes see on Constitution mirrors — at the sides. And I like the symmetrical broken arch at the top, and the old silvered dial which proclaims it to have been made by one J. B. Giobbio for the Crown Inn at Devises. May good fortune wait on it and send it safe to Hanover, for barometers are fragile traveling companions.

Another shop, very good for smaller things, gave me two more cardcases for the inconsiderable sum of twelve and six, the first engraved with arabesques, the second embellished with a silver plate for the owner's initials. I felt very rich indeed, for that makes seven already in my collection. I think I'll go back to that shop again sometime; none of the

prices were high, and there were as many *occasions* as I used to find at the smaller French places, among them two quaint Sunderland lustre plaques, like one I bought at Winchester, that I could have had for ten shillings each. Every now and then I wish I were a dozen people!

I was loath to leave Wiltshire; the villages here are quite as pretty as Bibury, and much less known. When we come to Bath for our lazy September, we must be sure to run down to Biddeston and Castle Combe, and then you shall decide where I shall buy my cottage; I could be happy, I think, in either place. Gloucester I know I shan't want; when you've eliminated its splendid Cathedral with those lofty cloisters, the College Green, and the few old houses that have remained by some miracle, it is just a busy, bustling manufacturing town, rather like Lowell or Lawrence. I suppose I was disappointed because, when my children were little things, we used so to love *The Tailor of Gloucester*, and it is sadly changed from the time "when gentlemen wore ruffles, and gold-laced waistcoats of paduasoy and taffeta." We walked out on Westgate Street, and fancied we had discovered the shop where the poor old Tailor used to sit, cross-legged, and work at the Mayor's cherry-colored coat, and wandered into College Court and saw the very house where he lodged with Simpkin, his bad, intelligent pussycat. I had set my heart upon purchasing some quaint faïence like the crockery



The inlaid barometer with beautiful, silvery dial.

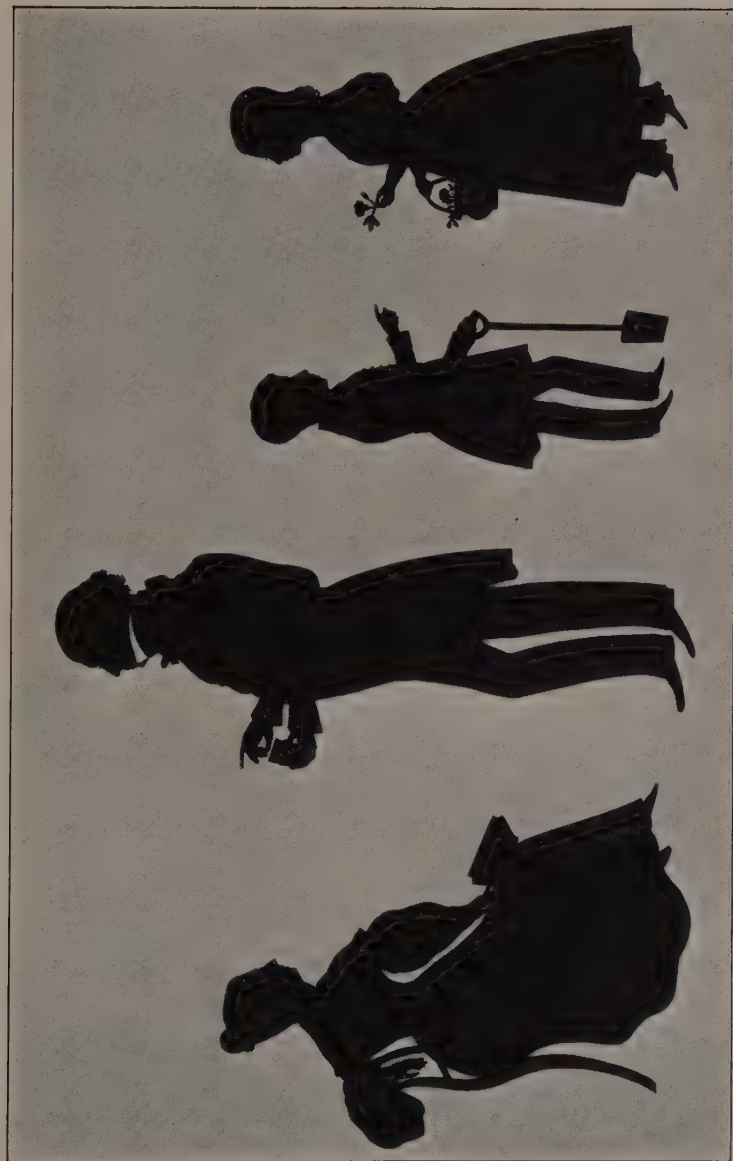


and pipkins 'and willow-pattern plates that used to adorn the kitchen dresser, but I searched without success. There were no more cups! Gloucester, for a cathedral town and a thriving manufacturing town too, is singularly devoid of antique shops, although, I am told, there are a number of private dealers; one of the shopkeepers in Cheltenham complained to me that the antique business was being ruined by the doctors and clergymen who were in it on the side. (I give this for what it is worth.)

I found just two shops in all Gloucester: one in College Court, the other on Northgate Street, both with a few things worth getting, although the prices were decidedly higher than at Bath and the range much more limited. Still, why should I protest when, at the second, I found the greatest silhouette bargain of my whole collecting experience? The blindest of blind spots! I am sure you will agree with me when I tell you that I bought six stunning Edouarts for a fraction over two dollars apiece, just two pounds ten for the lot. In America I have been asked all the way from fifteen to forty dollars for single shades, and even in Edinburgh, an excellent hunting-ground for profiles, I paid seven dollars. All of mine are suitably framed in narrow black, and the little stamp at the back shows them to have come from Mrs. Nevill Jackson's collection. These are duplicate profiles, Edouart having always cut in this method, you remember, invariably labeling the name of the sitter

and the date of the cutting on the reverse of the silhouette. One, the earliest, snipped in 1832, is a gallant soldier, Lieutenant James of the Ninth Light Infantry, Glasgow. The rest are all from Gloucester: Phillpots, Esq., a dandified gentleman holding a lorgnon; and a most interesting family gathering: E. G. Hill, Esq. (apparently some county official), his wife and his small son and daughter. It is both characteristic and pleasing — the lady, seated in an Empire chair, looking up from her book at her dignified husband who addresses her, snuffbox in hand; the little boy with his spade, and his pantaletted sister holding a basket of those familiar Edouart flowers. Don't you think I was lucky?

Of course I tried collecting in the neighborhood of Gloucester, but without much result. Cheltenham, for instance, was an awful washout in more ways than one. To begin with, it is very unbeautiful, all cumbersome Victorian houses and a pompous Parade; and then I had the misfortune to go on early-closing day, so that the finer shops were shut tight. Still, in the less pretentious part of town I found three places that were worth while; at one a much more graceful (and cheaper) copper urn than a similar piece I bought at Ventnor; I was tempted to get it, but I really don't need it, and it would be frightfully hard to pack. At another place, a small jewelry shop, I bought a pretty pair of Georgian salt-spoons for six shillings, and at a third, where the man hunted unsuc-



An Edouart group from Gloucester; formerly in Mrs. Nevill Jackson's collection.



cessfully for valentines he had hopelessly misplaced, I could have acquired another barometer, very much like mine in general shape, though without so attractive a dial, for three shillings less than I paid at Chippenham, also two provincial Chippendale oak chairs, wooden-seated, but with a decided homely charm, and only five pounds for the pair.

We left Gloucester without great regret, although our inn was comfortable and of exceeding age, having been built to accommodate the thronging pilgrims who came to worship at Edward the Second's shrine in the Cathedral, though how on earth that weak and dissolute monarch could ever be considered a martyred saint, I cannot imagine. True, he had a wicked wife who brutally did him to death at Berkeley Castle, but other men have been equally unlucky in their domestic relations and with less popular sympathy. Still, all this is no discredit to the New Inn, with its high oak doors that are locked at ten every night, and its raftered gallery surrounding a courtyard — all very picturesque, but a trifle disconcerting when you emerge from your bath and find yourself looking down upon a crowd of motorists below.

My adventures and my letter are nearly at an end; I hope, my dears, you have not been bored with either. To get to Bibury we had to retrace our steps a little, and go back to Cirencester (Ciceter to the elect, although I always feel as if I were stuttering when I say it). We arrived to find a fair in full swing; the

market place in front of the old church was blazing with lights and whirring with merry-go-rounds, and as soon as we could struggle through the crowd and leave our bags at the King's Head, we joined the revelers, and had two rides round on gayly caparisoned plunging steeds. I do love a fair, even if it is completely modern! And the next morning I went out prowling and found — lots of things. But I very virtuously spent only twenty-five shillings, and bought a lustre tea-set, five cups and saucers, a tea-pot and two plates; I am beginning to believe that many of these sets were really made with only two — one for bread and butter, the other for cake. But I shall try to match it, of course, for the lustre is lovely, a lilac rim, sprigs of a deeper tone, and little dashes of green for emphasis. Why, the cups might be the very ones beneath which Simpkin hid the little fat mice. After all, Gloucester is only eighteen miles away, and they could have strayed over the Cotswolds to Cirencester.

What are you doing, my distant friends, and do you miss me and my pretty prattle as you should? I have ever so much to tell you, but it will keep, I suppose, until I come out West in February; besides, my candles are flickering down, my fire is nearly out, and Bibury is the drowsiest place! The little stream in front of our door sings us to sleep at bedtime, and wakes us up in the morning to a long day of idleness, wherein all we have to do is to yawn, and read, or



Two *Tailor of Gloucester* cups, and one of the pink lustre plates that go with them.



tramp over the hills and far away, or feed the flotilla of greedy white ducks that always are swimming on the clear, swift waters of the Colne. I am contented enough to linger a while longer, but my daughter, whose motto is *Excelsior*, and who is, I am convinced, a reincarnation of that exasperating youth who bore 'mid snow and ice his over-quoted banner, urges me on; and we go to-morrow to Fairford to see the old church and its wonderful windows, thence to Oxford. My love to all of you, and tell Bob I shall try to bring him home that box of his dreams.

Yours most affectionately,

ALICE

P. S. Please contradict any rumors that you may hear about a food shortage in England; there is still an abundance of cabbages, potatoes, and Brussels sprouts. If any more of these kindly fruits of the earth are offered to me, I am prepared to call a general strike!

A.

## IV

### AND THEN I BOUGHT—

*Oxford, Friday*

DEAR MARCELLA AND GEORGE, —

IS 'NT it strange how the best-laid plans of a wandering collector sometimes go astray? I had meant to write you a long letter from Kent, from the little convent high up on the Dover cliffs, the wash of the tumbling seas below, and quiet peace enfolding me, with exploring walks through the Weald when I felt energetic, visits farther down the coast to Rye and Pevensey, and a final, glorious pilgrimage to Canterbury. But when I was at Ventnor I caught a wretched cold — a topsy-turvy thing to do, for doctors send you to that balmy spot to recover from such afflictions — and I coughed and coughed until I sounded like Camille in the fifth act. Lovely as the sea was, it did seem imprudent to linger any longer, and I hurried inland with a sincere regret for all the beauty I had to miss.

So here I am in the turmoil of Oxford, a busy, bustling place with a traffic system almost rivaling Paris in perils, and an academic charm that grows but slowly upon me. I suppose I am cross because it is frightfully, depressingly wet; it has rained and rained for days, ever since we left Bibury, in fact; the streets are like that brown gravy-soup they serve

such a lot in England, and although it is dripping and damp it is far too warm to have a fire in our bedroom. I don't thrill over my hotel, either, a drummerish sort of place; I can't see why on earth it was recommended to me. Even though it has an ancient courtyard, and tradition links its name with Cranmer and Latimer, and my waiter told me at breakfast this morning that it dates back to the memorable year 1066, still I don't like it; it has none of that kindly, welcoming feeling that make so many little English inns shine like blazing hearths in your memory.

I suppose when the sun comes out — if ever it does! — I shall grow more cheerful; adventure farther; prowl around in the antiquity shops, and find adorable things just as Louise C—— did a year ago. Already there have been a few gleams of luck, just enough to keep my courage up, though as yet I have n't found precisely the little tangible bit of time past that I want for you both. But shall I tell you what I did discover? I don't know whether Cora has read you the interminable letter I sent her from Gloucestershire, and if she has n't you cannot realize my latest, maddest passion; I have n't had such a lively enthusiasm since I collected historical glass cup-plates. This last idolatry of mine is cardcases, mother-of-pearl cardcases! Pretty, delicate, fragile, early-Victorian things that our grandmothers loved and cherished in the eighteen-thirties, and that discerning collectors, in this year of nineteen hundred

and twenty-five, are beginning to cherish and love again. It was on the High Street, in a shop that is a good deal of a "mixtry," that we found our first;



The radiant case that Alicia's sharp eyes spied in the gloom of a gray Oxford twilight.

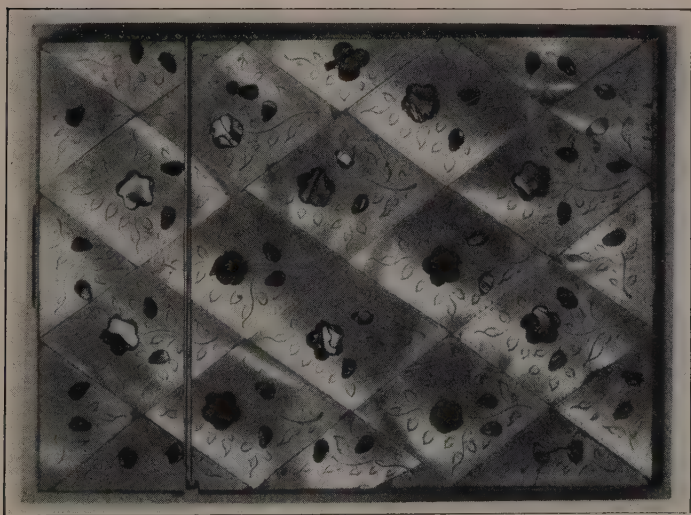
Alicia's sharp eyes, peering through the gloom of a gray twilight, saw one radiant case twinkling in a window crowded with old jewelry and china, and of course we went in to investigate and seek further. It really was a love, and, although it cost twenty-five shillings, — the highest price we had encountered,

— my daughter decided that she would make economies and buy it for my birthday. The workmanship is very fine, the diamonds of rosy nacre beautifully engraved with tiny posies, and separated by a narrow thread of darker pearl, while the same peacock iridescence is caught up by the band at the edges. There were others also, and we bought two of them; one, for fifteen shillings, quite unlike anything I have seen so far, the pearl diamonds a little paler and not only engraved but inset with little flowers and leaves of the green-blue shell; it is far and away my rarest case. The third — fifteen shillings, too — was papier-mâché with an inlaid design of mother-of-pearl roses, enriched with gilded foliage — not so pretty, but then these papier-mâché cases are infinitely harder to find than those made just of pearl.

All this happened the first evening of our arrival, and, the next morning, when I had to go up to London on weighty financial business, Alicia, who is the best little scout in the world (my daughter leans over my shoulder as I write, and deplores my slang), went antique-ing on her own, and hunted up three more in a shop — such an attractive place — principally devoted to china and glass and Oriental ivories, but with a scattering of these shining pretties. The old dealer obligingly made her a price of twelve shillings each and they were worth it: the first engraved, and embellished with strips of dark

nacre; the other two all rosy pink, one perfectly plain, but soft and gleaming, the other with the diamonds set across, not up and down, and with a delicate incised decoration at the edge and in the centre. Sometimes, when I look at my newest pets, I feel as if, considering my limited purse, I had been spending money like a drunken sailor. Well, if I had n't exercised *some* self-control, I could have squandered my cash like two of them. Or a whole ship's crew! I have had to pass by many that I wanted, for, strange as it may seem, I have never seen two exactly alike, and naturally it is variety in a collection that makes it interesting and valuable.

At Banbury I found another, carved facets of pearl set in an oblong, surrounded by a half-inch band of tortoise shell, and with edges of tortoise shell, also. This was two and six, but three tiny strips of the mottled shell had paid their toll to time, and since it cost me five shillings to have them replaced I suppose you may count this case as seven and six. A nice little man sold it to me, and he had heaps of other things I should have liked if I had had the necessary space and money. For instance, an excellent eighteenth-century globe on a mahogany tripod standard for only thirty-five shillings — I longed for it, but the only logical place to put it is Orde's study, and he, unfortunately, has a prejudice in favor of modern maps! There was a pair of mahogany Chippendale chairs as well for three



Two of my rarest cardcases.



pounds ten apiece, and pretty little tip-tables for thirty-five shillings, and a sweet Constitution mirror with a little cut-out gold oak-leaf in the top, quite small and early, and but twenty-five. I think I must write back for that. And certainly his prices for wheel-back Windsors were lower than I have found them at any other shop.

Banbury was a joyous adventure in spite of the downpour. It was raining mildly but firmly when I started, not on a cockhorse, as I should have ridden to visit this celebrated town of our childhood, but in a matter-of-fact, everyday train. Heaven knows the countryside does n't need any more watering. As I passed along through green Oxfordshire with its half-submerged meadows, its ponds, and its constant little streamlets set with graceful willows, I understood why my favorite *Plasher's Mead* had always seemed to me one of the *wettest* books I ever read. I don't see how the farmers hereabouts can raise any crops but ducks and geese. And when I had left the security of the station, and had walked halfway to the market place, and not a taxi was in sight, the rain came down in torrents. I reached the square as wet and shivering as the droves of poor cows and calves standing there patiently waiting for a buyer. I was luckier than they, for I comforted myself with a steaming pot of tea and real Banbury tarts, in an old, old shop where the glow of a log fire played over the dark oak rafters, and

groups of market folk, as wet as I was, sat and sipped their cheerful, un-inebriating cups. Take my advice, dear George and Marcella, and if you must eat Banbury tarts go to Banbury to do it; here they melt in your mouth, luscious flakes of pastry with a sort of plummy mincemeat filling; and everywhere else that I have ordered them they have been dreadful, dry-as-dust things.

Then, refreshed, I sallied forth and found another antique-dealer, really a cabinetmaker, though on the side he goes in for old pieces as well. He did n't have quite so much, but there were two transition chairs that were cheap at eight pounds, the sort, you know, where Chippendale merges into Hepplewhite, and the top rail curves in the shape of a shield, while the older form of the splat is maintained. A touch of Hepplewhite here, too: a quite unusual shallow carving of the three feathers, the Prince of Wales's crest, so much associated with this cabinetmaker. The dealer had two shapely shaving-glasses, also, the smaller with a pretty checkered line of inlay in the frame, the other beautifully veneered, and respectively thirty and thirty-five shillings apiece. I did wish I had known somebody who wanted them! This shop is down near the famous Cross — not the old one, you know, for that the Puritans, in their mistaken zeal, pulled down during the Civil War. An awful place for Puritans Banbury was; I believe it was in this very town that one over-godly man

“hanged his cat on Monday for killing a mouse on Sunday.”

But I feel so sad when I think of the old Cross being destroyed, not just on account of the Mother Goose rhyme, but for the sake of the ancients legend from which the jingle came. Do you know it, — I did n't until I journeyed here, — this tale of a young knight bewitched and caught in magic toils, and his true love who, to free him, walked thrice about the Cross, clad only in her linen shift? A far greater trial of devotion than Lady Godiva's, for it was bleak winter, at midnight, and the lady went in shuddering fear of the wolves. And the long-ago story has the pretty and prosperous ending it deserves, for, in the spring, when the brave knight was once more free and well, the castle gates swung wide and the fair, fine lady rode forth upon a white palfrey, her fingers gleaming with jewels, and all the harness hung with tinkling golden bells, and they were married and lived happy all the rest of their days. And that's why, ever since, countless little children have ridden a cockhorse to Banbury Cross.

Farewell for a little, my dears. Pouring out my grievances to you has put me in a good humor once more; besides, the sun is beginning to shine — a very little, just enough to “gild a buttercup” — and I don't want to miss a moment of its capricious light. And then two of the boys I used to know at Dartmouth are coming to show us the colleges, and, if we

have time, we are going out to tea at their "digs." Alicia is putting on her hat, and calling to me to hurry, and so I leave you.

*Oxford, Monday*

Oh, Marcella and George, I like Oxford! Better still, I know why I did n't care for it at first. Nobody was to blame for the weather, and that I discount, deploring it as I do so; but now I am convinced that I ought never to have settled in lodgings on that crowded Cornmarket where the pavements are thronged with shoppers and perambulators — no race suicide here, I assure you — and you skillfully dodge a bus or a motor only to find a bicycle careering at you full tilt. I really should have gone to the quiet little hotel near Magdalen where Louise stayed, or to an old inn down by Zuleika Dobson's emperors, for here where I am it's all such a medley that it's difficult to realize scholarly leisure or the mediæval, cloistered atmosphere supposed to be symbolic of Oxford. Once one of my friends told me that she would always know I came from New England because I invariably wanted to legislate about anything I did n't like. It's quite true; if I had my way I'd make laws by which all the business section of the town, "those slums which connect Oxford with the world," should be automatically erased, and then she could go back to her dreaming spires. I don't mean anything cruel, you understand: I

would n't kill the people; I'd just put them somewhere else. And if ever I were advising my friends about their first glimpse of Oxford, I'd tell them to come late on a Sunday afternoon at twilight, and then walk to Magdalen bridge and look back across the shadowy, mingling waters to the gray towers beyond. Or very early Sunday morning, when nobody was about and you could stroll, unimpeded, up the High Street, would do just as well; there's a certain large magnificence about it then that later in the day quite disappears; by noon the charm is vanished.

Of course it's great fun to see the boys hurrying around in those absurd short black gowns, with the occasional emphasis of one of greater length and dignity, like a very definite exclamation point amid periods and commas. They're a good-looking lot, I'll say that for them; I really think there are more handsome men here than at any other university I know; they are quite worthy to belong to these fine old colleges, and to walk in the even more wonderful gardens. Perhaps Wordsworth was right, and beauty, born not of murmuring sound, *most assuredly*, but of noble backgrounds, has passed into their faces. I'm very sure it would do me good, make me over mentally, to dine in stately Christchurch Hall, or walk across wide greenswards, thick and smooth and centuries old. Everybody says, "Oh, spring at Oxford, and autumn at Cambridge," but, despite the rain, I cannot regret coming now; I am fond of these

fall days, this spirit dwelling in the year's last hours, and nothing could be fairer than the tawny beeches, and the bands of Michaelmas daisies that outline the sombre old walls, a gamut of color from misty lavender to royal purple.

But to return to my antique muttons, as elusive, I must say, as Bo-Peep's lost sheep, I have had very little luck indeed. Or perhaps I should say that the High Street — most of the antiquity shops are there, you know — deserves its name, and that, on the whole, Oxford is not the place for collectors whose ambitions are lofty and whose funds are low. After Bath the prices were a shock, and yet, to be quite candid, some of the lovely and expensive things were even lovelier and less expensive than they would have been in America. As I write this I am thinking of the handsomest girandole mirror I have ever seen, large, but not clumsy, just a gracious size, the old gilt very little marred, and, rarest touch of all, a black instead of a gold eagle at the top. I have never seen one or even heard of one before, and I thought it well worth the fourteen guineas that were asked for it. And I found another shop where the owner sells principally to bigger dealers; his prices, particularly for chairs, were very reasonable indeed — sets of really good Windsors decidedly within any collector's reach, and chairs from Lancashire, with reversed-wave slats, like our Pennsylvania-Dutch type, and pudgy pad-feet, for three pounds apiece.

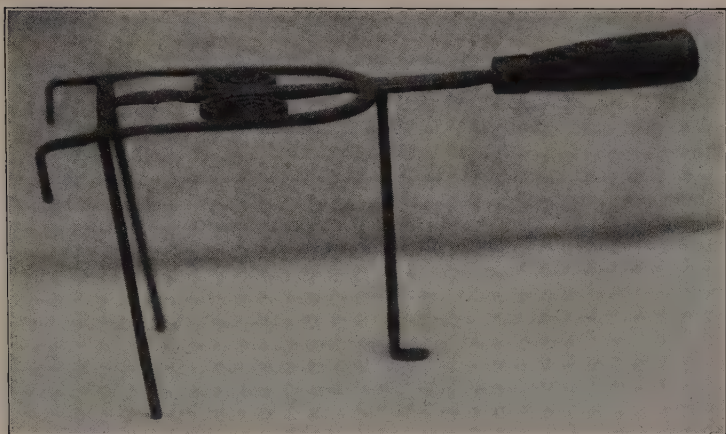
Still, one bargain (or even two, for that matter) does n't make a happy hunting-ground, and I do honestly think that the poor but honest collector would do well to look elsewhere.

Louise had given me her addresses, most helpful and time-saving, as you may imagine, and at one "pokey" shop she recommended I saw many small things I would have liked, and bought a few of them: first an eighteenth-century iron trivet, seven inches in height and pleasingly though plainly designed. For this I paid ten shillings, and I was delighted to get one so genuine and so old. The standing brass trivets are being terribly faked, you see, and, besides, this will suit my friendly fireplace much better — and save me a lot of polishing. Then for five shillings I bought another trivet, a flat, engaging brass heart adorned with a cut trefoil pattern, and meant, I fancy, to hold a teapot. For years I've longed for — and tried, without success, to buy — a comely and domestic-looking pair of these trivets which belong to some Scotch people who live in Our Town, and now, if only I can find another to match my bargain, why, I shan't have to soil my soul with envy any longer.

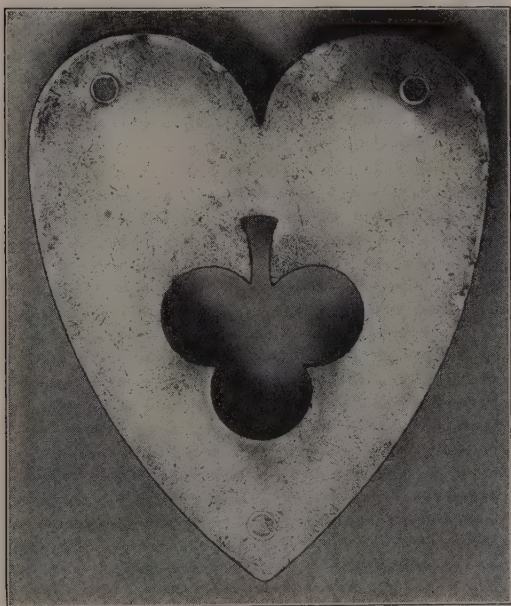
I almost got a stunning copper coal-scuttle for you, but I stopped just in time, for I could n't conceive what you would do with it in a steam-heated Chicago hotel. Moreover, I've really set my heart on finding you a big pewter bowl, silvery and shining,

and not depending on any environment, since, filled with flowers or fruit, it will fall in agreeably with any background.

To-night I am fearfully sleepy. Do my yawns show in my letter? I hope not, but I'd have the best of excuses if they did. Yesterday we were most energetic; the weather was too tempting to muddle away indoors, the first really fine day we have had, and in the morning we walked out to Iffley, by the towpath, to see that marvelous Romanesque church, Margaret's favorite, by the way. A brave new world, and not too many people in it — just a few groups of students strolling along like ourselves. I loved it all, the blue sky, dappled with little fleckings of cloud, the warm, gentle sunshine, and the tranquil Isis; not even a whispering of wind ruffled its calm surface, or stirred the golden trees upon its banks. We lunched at Iffley, and then in the afternoon went on to Woodstock, rambled through the park at Blenheim, and came home utterly exhausted. One thing I can praise about the inn: my bed was comfortable, and I slid miles into sleep almost immediately, and was happy — until about two o'clock in the morning, when the most awful racket shattered my peace. I must explain that the landlord keeps up the quaint mediæval custom of barring the high gates every night — if he had a drawbridge that would be raised, too — and it seems that young Lord C——, revisiting the scenes of his undergraduate days, had spent



An eighteenth-century iron trivet with a wooden handle; pleasingly though plainly designed, and agreeably adapted to my friendly fireplace.



A low little brass trivet, heart-shaped, and cut with a trefoil pattern.



a joyous evening with his chosen companions and returned only to find he had been locked out. I think, from the poundings and smashing and halloosings, that he must have fancied himself leading a Border foray; dim atavistic memories awoke, and he was a Highland chieftain again. I never heard such a noise in my life! Dartmouth can't do anything like it! After what seemed hours, but I suppose was about fifteen minutes, Boots awoke, and I could hear him clattering over the cobblestones, and see the thin light of his lantern flickering along. But there was no more sleep for me until dawn, and I plan to stay at a temperance hotel in Stratford on Avon; there, at least, if the old adage of birds of a feather flocking together is true, I shall have peace.

*Stratford on Avon, Thursday*

If I were what some English people like to think of as "typically American," I should write you that we had landed in Shakespeare's home town. But, my dear friends, if I stopped to combat all the superstitions about our country that exist in England, I should never do anything else. So far, I have had to explain that there are very beautiful trees in America; that my compatriots do not say "I guess" and "I reckon" in one sentence; that most of us have middling purses; that the Ku-Klux Klan is not a purely benevolent institution made necessary because with us there is no legal redress; that our houses are not

stuffily overheated; and that, occasionally, you may venture on the city streets at night without being shot at by gunmen.

But I am too completely happy and comfortable to protest any more. Thanks to my desire for tranquillity and the discreet choice of my cabman, we are staying at the pleasantest place we yet have found: an old house, built on different levels, with spacious, sunny rooms, flowers everywhere, glowing hearths, and rosy chintz curtains to draw when the evening chill comes on. Our room is delightful, high and wide, and furnished with old oak: a capacious seventeenth-century press to hang our clothes in, a carved-oak chest for hats or bags or anything we like, and though the chairs are a hundred years younger, they are of a sturdy provincial type that makes them perfectly harmonious. Best of all, our windows look upon the narrow Avon, — Ophelia's river, — willows growing aslant it, and showing their hoar leaves in its glassy stream; they say, you know, that Shakespeare, when he wrote *Hamlet*, still was dreaming of Warwickshire. And the food is delicious, really, the best we have had, well cooked, and for British fare highly imaginative, and served by alert, pretty waitresses in becoming blue-linen gowns. Altogether a very "posh" place in everything but the price, which, for what we are getting, is moderation itself.

Of course we saw the lions: Shakespeare's house,

Ann Hathaway's cottage, and the rest, all far too well known to need my simple praises. I dare say Stratford on Avon is commercialized; you feel it when the children besiege you with ivy leaves at Shottery, and hold out their practised palms for tips. Still, I don't at all agree with the Oxford don who said that he did wish it could be proved that Bacon wrote Shakespeare, because it would serve Stratford on Avon right! For had it remained just a little Iberian village I might not have gone there, and then how could I have found the antique shop that held your destined pewter bowl? I really felt awfully pleased to get it; good old pewter is growing fearfully hard to buy nowadays, and this is such a jolly, fat, round piece, thirteen inches in diameter, three inches deep, and with strong, squarish handles. And only thirty-five shillings! I do hope you will like it. Fate must have meant it for you, for besides the excellent hallmarks of the crown and lion rampant, there are the simple initials, G.M. — George and Marcella, you see! I bought a bit of pewter for myself, too, a little pepper-pot for five and six, not quite a dollar and a half, and much less than dealers at home are asking. I think it exactly matches one I already have, so now I own a complete set — last Christmas having brought me a pretty pair of pewter saltcellars, English too.

Aside from these bargains I thought the prices here were high, and I sought for less expensive worlds to conquer. And I found them: a little shop on your

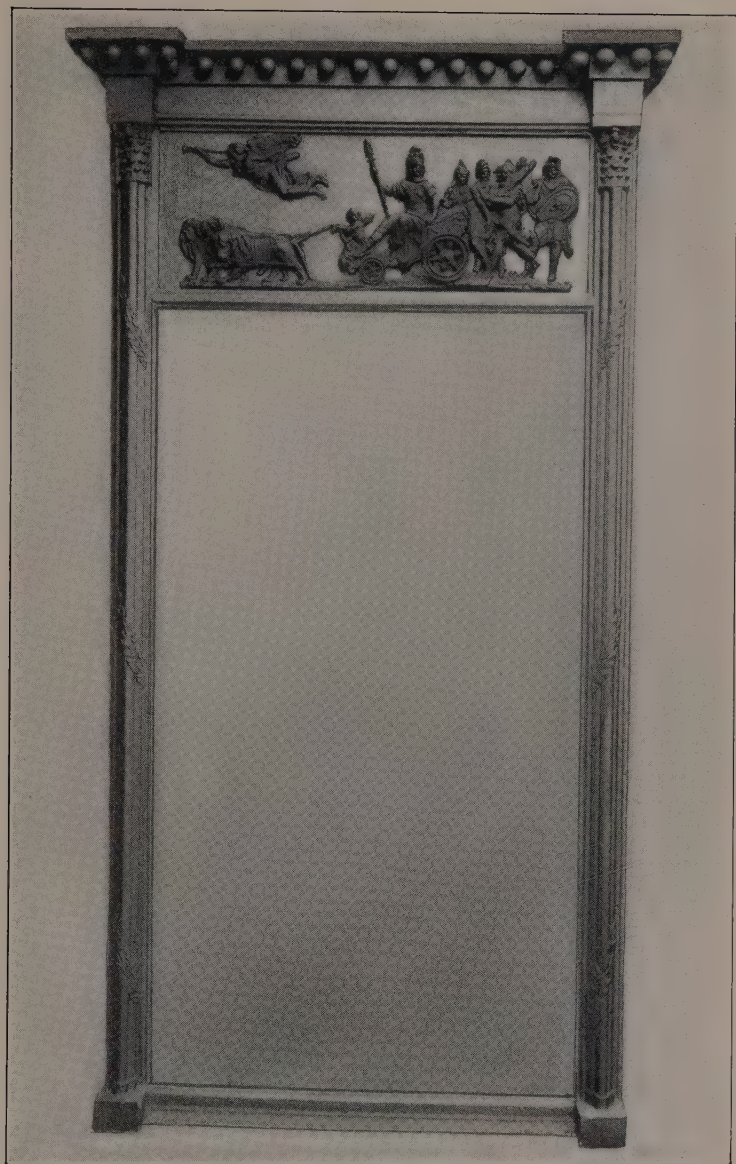
way to the railway station. Just small things the woman has: porcelains and old silver and chains and little boxes. I bought a tea caddy for Bob, — as you may guess, he will use it for a cigarette box, — a softly brown mahogany piece with little edging-lines of holly and an inlaid Sheraton shell on the lid. It was just five shillings, but I think he will like it; he's always wanted that Boulle caddy of mine I picked up at the Paris rag-fair. And for my own delight I bought another cardcase, plain pearl except for the large engraved diamond in the centre — and that was seven and six.

But my real good-fortune came at a dealer's in an out-of-the-way district, not near any of the show-places at all. I suppose that's why his prices are so low; I could n't believe my luck when he told me that a very large and exceedingly handsome Empire mirror was only three pounds ten. I bought it, not only for my own satisfaction, but to please my daughters, who are constantly complaining that there is n't a looking-glass in the whole house big enough for them to see themselves in. This ought to be; it measures four feet three inches by two feet four, a truly grandiloquent piece, you perceive; there are twenty balls dependent from the overhanging cornice — Nelson's cannon-balls over here. English collectors would sniff at the idea of their being significant only of our early States, and, actually, they have no nationality; they are merely a characteris-



The jolly, fat, round pewter bowl with strong, squarish handles





The largest and one of the handsomest Empire mirrors I saw at any shop.  
The classic bas-relief in black is particularly fine.



tic bit of Empire decoration. The columns are decorated at intervals with carved acanthus leaves and end in well-modeled capitals, but the real climax of the whole mirror is the frieze, with its bas-relief of classic black figures against a gilt background. It must depict some mythological subject, Mars, very likely, for he and his soldiers are armed cap-a-pie, while Victory, blowing a trumpet, flies overhead, and Cupid drives the lions. It is far grander than any other glass I possess, and I shan't grudge the rearrangement of my bedroom that it will entail; though so much larger and finer, it is in manner very like the two I already have.

After all this magnificence it will seem rather a come-down when I describe the small white-and-blue sauce-dish that I bought for my Fastidious Friend. She is collecting this simple Leeds-ware of creamy paste with delicate edgings of a full, deep blue put on in rather wavering, feathery lines. I have seen quite a lot of it since I have been here, plates and platters chiefly; and this sauce-dish, genuinely cheap at seven and six, is the most desirable bit so far.

Oddly enough, there is a theory that none of this faïence is to be found in England, all of it having been made for the American market; but, if this is so, a lot of it must have been brought back. I believe I'd like a set of this attractive, innocent-looking ware; a quaint sauce-boat to begin with, a

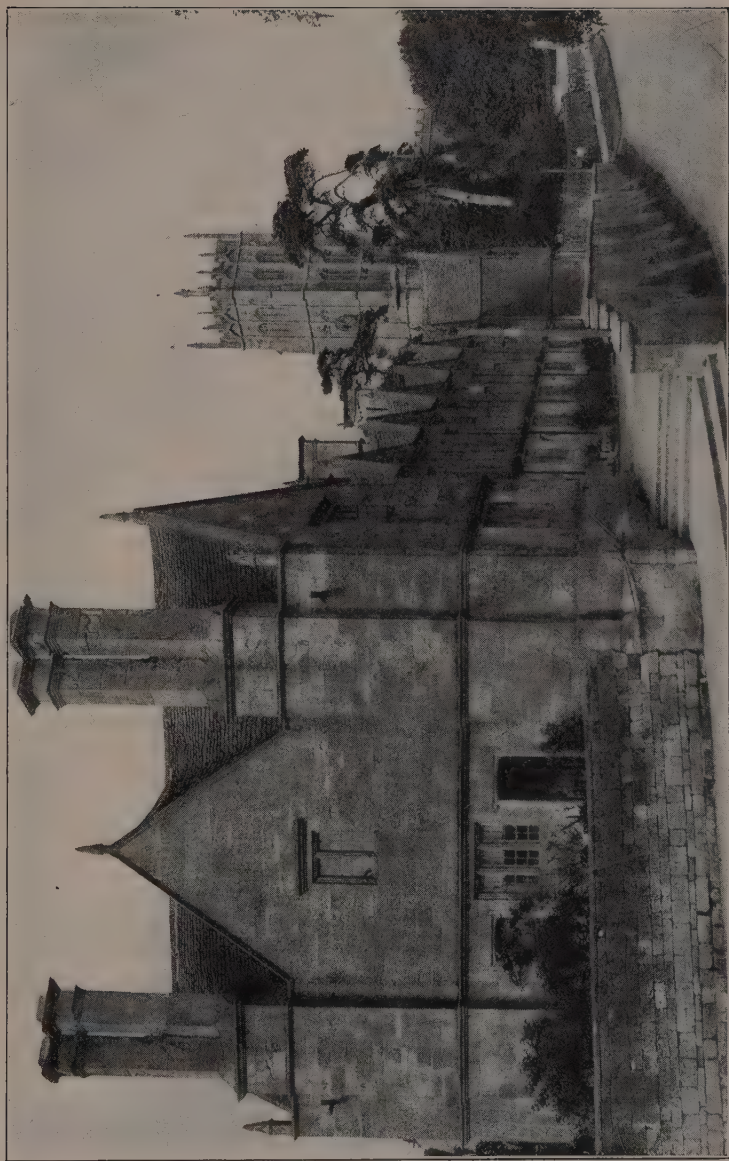
graceful morning-glory atop, and the handles prince's feathers touched with blue. I always want to want the things I give away; they would n't seem like presents if I did n't.

This is all my antique-ing news, but I hunted, too, in Chipping Campden and Broadway, and found three more shops, though I did n't buy anything. And I had a minor disappointment. I had heard so much about Campden (lately — such a pity! — they've dropped the old prefix, which means "market") that I suppose my imagination had overglorified it, and when I saw it I could not help being a little disillusioned. It's nowhere nearly so charming, so completely harmonious, as several other small towns I have found in my ramblings. Still, the old Market is very fine, and the Wool-Staplers' Hall and the Greville House well worth a visit. Broadway, however, was rewardingly beautiful; it reminded me of a lovely country lass, but a country lass who quite understood her charms; in that, it lacked the more ingenuous grace of Bibury. Some day I want to go back there and stay for a week in spring, when all the world is green. There's a picturesque inn, gabled and vine-grown and as comfortable as it is comely, where you can stay, *en pension*, for something like thirty-five dollars a week. I had a sumptuous tea there: brown bread and white bread, little buttered biscuits, and heavenly strawberry jam and plum-cake, all for two shillings. And, as further



Leeds-ware sauce-dish; the creamy paste is adorned with touches of full, deep blue; prince's feathers form the handles; a graceful morning-glory lifts the lid.





Beautiful gabled houses of mellow gray stone at Chipping Campden, and the tall fifteenth-century tower of St. James rising beyond.



diversion, there are a couple of very good shops in Broadway with prices much lower than they are at Oxford. I longed to turn back the hands of the clock and rest here luxuriously for days instead of just one scanty afternoon. But Time, the relentless young gypsy-man, refuses to pack up his caravan even for a few hours, and I must be home before Christmas.

We go on to Warwick to-morrow, and I am wondering what my luck will be. I'll let you know if it's anything out of the ordinary.

*Warwick, Sunday*

I wish you could have seen us limping into Warwick in a broken-down fly, surely as old as the One-Hoss Shay, and drawn by a steed almost as decrepit. I could n't help thinking of the puzzled American who asked an English friend what on earth was a job-master, and was even more perplexed by being told that he was "a man who kept flies and let them out!" Well, my fly certainly had one resemblance to an insect: it crawled! But at last we reached our hotel — another Temperance — not at all grand, but clean and comfortable, and with very good breakfasts; and amazingly cheap, a very endearing trait to me in the present state of my finances. But why, oh why, did I ever say a temperance hotel was quiet? They give dances every night, apparently, and I have lain awake to the strains of "I want to

b-e-e h-a-ap-py, but I can't b-e-e h-a-ap-py," until it just did n't make "me-e h-a-ap-py, t-o-o!"

Still, I like Warwick, and again I'd gladly have stopped longer, but we have booked our rooms in London, and must go up on the afternoon train. There were so many places we wanted to see and could n't: Guy's Cliff, and Cumnor Castle, and Coventry with its three old churches; they will have to wait for another time. We rejoiced in Warwick Castle, vast and imposing and beautifully set in its green park, but, to me, lacking something of the unity of either Langeais or Chaumont. I mean the furniture seemed to have so little relation to the background, and nothing will ever persuade me that even an incomparable Adam mantel looks well in a florid Louis Fourteenth apartment furnished with Boulle cabinets. But the portraits are magnificent, and I would have given my ears for an oak marriage-chest, sumptuously carved and inlaid, that was made for Izaak Walton and his first wife, Rachel Floud.

However, we completely enjoyed Kenilworth, perhaps because it was so solitary: sheep grazing on the greensward, those tall rose-red towers against an autumn sky, and only three other visitors, who seemed as anxious to lose us as we were to avoid them. That's the real advantage of traveling at this time of the year; rain and fog we may encounter, but our views will not be blurred by a mist of tour-

ists. And when I saw Leicester Hospital I was thankful to be late, though the chapel and the raft-ered rooms were deep in shadows; I had the eloquence of an old pensioner, a soldier who had gone to the wars, and come back, in his ancient age, to peace and comfort, all to myself, and there was nobody to hurry along his stories of the romantic days when King James “right nobly was entertained” in the old banqueting-hall. He must have loved that phrase, for he repeated it again and again.

In between sightseeings I reveled in antiquity shops. Indeed “reveled” seems all too poor a word, for such good hunting I have never seen before. I really don’t regret a single piece I already have bought. I want every one of them; but I know now that a great many old things would have been much cheaper here, and, next time, I shall go to Warwick first of all, and with a pocket bulging with money. Most of the shops are on Jury Street — there are only about five in the whole town — and at one, kept by an old man and his daughter, I got an early-Victorian *silhouette colorée* for four shillings. I did n’t want to buy the frame, a tortured thing of elaborately carved wood, and the daughter did want to keep it, very fortunately for both of us; besides, I have a gilded oval at home that will just suit the lady’s delicate charms. She really is lovely in her long black riding-habit, with a brown veil tied over her tall hat, and a knot of ribbon at her breast that

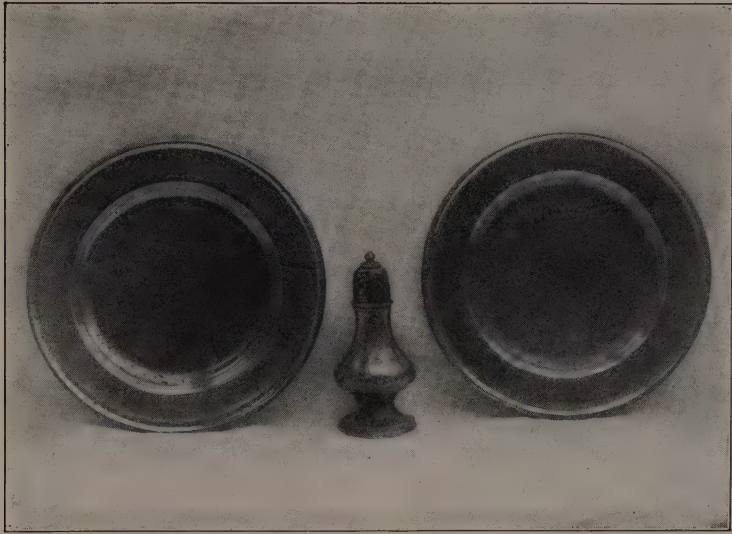
just matches the roses of her cheek. It is amateur work, I fancy; at least I do not know the name, Richard Dighton, that is penciled in one corner. I could have bought other things, too, a sin of omission I am beginning to regret. Seven and six would have brought me a white pearl cardcase, the diamonds separated by threads of black; for a shilling less I could have had a small, sprigged Bristol bowl with a silver lustre rim, and a cup to go with it, and for five pounds one of the most interesting pieces of historical glass I have ever found: ringing flint glass engraved with a spread eagle, the Liberty Tree, and the legend, "Success to the United States." I suppose it was one of the English glasses made to commemorate the victories of the War of 1812, just as the blue Staffordshire china did — a commercially-minded fact I always hasten to mention when America is accused of caring too much for money.

Across the street there was another shop with even more; truly, I never saw so many collecting chances all at once: tall blue-glass candlesticks, quite perfect, for only twenty-five shillings, a very unusual satinwood tea-caddy for the same sum, chairs and tables and cupboards unbelievably low, and a fine gilt-and-black mantel mirror even better than the one I bought at Stratford on Avon for just what I paid there. I think I must have it to hang in my parlor, and let the black sphinxes and the gold



My engaging *silhouette colorée*, an early-Victorian charmer profiled  
by Richard Dighton.





The pewter plates are from Warwick, but the pepper-pot I bought at Stratford on Avon.



frame echo the notes of iron and gleaming brass in my Franklin fireplace below. What I actually did buy was another cardcase, — you are probably sick of hearing my raptures by now, — but this was such a pretty, different one that I'd never have forgiven myself if I had lost it. Except a cardcase that I was offered in America at an exorbitant price, it is the only one that I have seen with alternate facets of light and dark pearl, and especially good since the paler nacre is engraved with flower sprays. But a purchase that was even more gratifying was a set of pewter plates, six of them, all well hall-marked, for two pounds five: about half what I was asked in Oxford; and then they're just the size I wanted for tea plates, seven inches in diameter. They solve a problem for me, also. I have picked up two lustre tea-sets, but neither have any plates other than the large ones intended for bread and butter and cake; and lustre, as you know if you've ever tried to do it, is the most unmatched thing in the whole world.

But now my difficulties are over; I shall use these plates and a pewter teapot — maybe a hot-water jug as well — and with my slender little spoons I shall have the prettiest effect in the world, all rose and silvery gleams.

Good-bye; I go to pack these, my latest splendors. What fun if you were to be in London to bat around

with me; I can't think of anybody I'd rather have, though I'd like to add Cora and Alma and William Rufus for good measure. My eternal thanks for the letter to E.V.L——; I've looked forward to meeting him for years. You *are* angels!

Yours affectionately and sincerely,

ALICE

## V

### LONDON TOWN

*November 15*

See-saw-sacradow,

When you go antique-ing in London Town,

It's one foot up and one foot down;

That's the way of antique-ing in London Town.

DEAR REGGIE AND MADELEINE, —

THE silly jingle at the top of my letter is just to express the joy of collecting in London — also the exhaustion. We have been here a fortnight, and already I despair of ever really knowing this vast, bewildering, delightful city; though perhaps if I come year after year, and put “one foot up and one foot down,” and travel in the tubes, and ride on the tops of busses (with the occasional indulgence of a taxi), and see everything and talk to everybody, why, I may, at the end of half a century, realize something of London's meaning. I remember you wrote me, just before I sailed, that you had felt more immediately at home here than in any other city, and I wonder, Reggie, if that is your latent New Englandism showing itself? After all, London is very like Boston, the Boston that I knew in my little girlhood — and especially so in the South Kensington district where we are now, for the tall houses circle themselves round green, iron-fenced gardens; there's a blur in the air and a reddened evening sky, — considering it's November we've been having wonderful

weather, — and at twilight Leerie comes round and lights the street-lamps just as he did when I was a child. Like Stevenson's small boy, "We are very lucky with a lamp before our door"; it's a real happiness! I think, though, that the less familiar muffin-man gave me a greater thrill. I do not know his name, and he may live at Hammersmith or Finsbury Park, not in Drury Lane at all, but, nevertheless, for me he was the muffin man of Mother Goose, and at the sound of his jangling bell I dropped my unpacking duties, and leaned out of my window until his white-clad figure, basket on head, had passed out of sight.

We are high, high up here, almost at the very top, ever so many stairs to climb, and no lift at all, and as I pant onward and upward I recall with regret the rooms we had two years ago on the rue de Vaugirard. I used to think I had to climb there, but in comparison they now seem on the rez-de-chaussée. Still, on the whole, we are comfortable; the house is huge — a Victorian structure built for some solid citizen; our chamber is spacious and sunny, and the decoration really is charming: soft hangings and carpets of dull blue, plain-covered easy-chairs, and creamy walls *with nothing on them*. I emphasize this because the art of the usual British boarding-house is awful and abundant, varying from chromos to black-framed steel engravings of cheery deathbed scenes, and rampant animals of the Landseer school.



London Bridge, another childhood friend. As Wenceslaus Hollar saw it in 1647, and as I, lover of the past, longed to behold it in 1926.



The food is betwixt and between; I mean, it is not so good as at Cowes and Stratford on Avon, and infinitely better than at Ventnor and Bibury. Alicia, however, still prefers to sleep through the breakfast-hour, her tastes being definitely in the French manner of rolls and chocolate. She opens one drowsy eye as I come into the room, and asks, "Was there fish?" and then adds, "I'm glad I did n't get up."

But, oh, the heavenly quiet of the place! Just a distant roar and a rosy, luminous horizon tell you that, beyond, lies the greatest city in the whole world. Sometimes I feel as if the only noises that break the stillness are the street hawkers' cries. There's one man, a flower-seller, who passes daily, pushing an enormous barrow flaming with red and yellow chrysanthemums, and as I listen to his cadenced, "Fresh! All fresh!" I wish that Wheatley might have immortalized him in his enchanting "London Cries." It is very unlike the grander quarters that you know, and yet I enjoy it all, from the friendly cats sitting on fresh-scoured steps to the glittering brass latches and knockers that make me wonder, with a little twinge, how my own are faring at Webster Cottage.

We came here, you know, to be near the Victoria and Albert Museum, and I find myself not so close as I could wish; a penny ride on the bus or the tube, or a brisk ten minutes' walk down Cromwell Road. No doubt the exercise is good for me, but now I spend my pennies and save my time and strength; I

can't bear to lose even a second of enjoyment in this, my chosen palace of art, and when next I am in London I shall settle down directly opposite if I can; I never want to say to myself, "Am I too weary to go there this afternoon?" Besides, just hereabouts, a most commodious subway leads straight into the Museum, — the sort of thing I have always dreamed of building under Fifth Avenue, you remember, — which spares me the pangs of crossing Cromwell Road, where the motors dash up and down with as little pause as on the Place de l'Opéra.

Still, if I were not living at Courtfield Gardens, I doubt if I ever should have found the nice little, cheap little shop where I bought my ale glass, for it is quite apart from any other antiquity-dealer's, angled in between a chemist's and a milliner's, and from a bus I never should have noticed it. My eye was caught by a glitter of silver in the window and the glow of walnut beyond, and I entered to look at a rat-tailed silver spoon, largish, which was only ten shillings. Fool that I was not to get it then and there! The next time I went in it was gone, and I shall never find another so cheap: eighteenth-century spoons like this are literally worth their weight in gold. But, praise be, I did n't overlook the ale glass, which I bought for twelve and six; it was almost as inexpensive as one I got two years ago in Paris. I call it an "ale glass" because that was the shop name for it; in America I should classify it as a flip glass (I don't



The eighteenth-century ale glass.



know whether flip is a purely American drink or not), for it is shaped precisely like a Stiegel piece which sits on my sideboard at home. It is less capacious, the banded decoration is etched, not quilted, and it may be German and not English at all, for the design of graceful leaves and birds and flowers reminds me of Stiegel's workmanship, and, of course, this Pennsylvania-Dutch glassmaker's craft constantly shows its Teutonic origin. I rather think it may have started life in a tavern; the bottom is nearly an inch in thickness, and in the riotous seven-teen hundreds, when the toasts went round, roisterers thumped the table with these heavy glasses in sign of approval.

I am so glad that I did n't pass this little shop by; most of the things are good, and assuredly everything is very cheap. Sometime you must adventure farther than your accustomed Bond Street haunts, and try hunting for bargains here; I know you'll find them. The woman who owns it "antiques" through the East Anglian counties, — Norfolk chiefly, I think, — and she always has interesting silver, and it's always very inexpensive.

I had another accidental bit of luck, too, while we were looking for a circulating library. I did want to go to Mudie's — all my friends in novels have boxes of books from Mudie's — but it was too far away, and so we contented ourselves with a tiny place on Gloucester Road. And in taking this simpler

path we found a beguiling shop; I don't think I've ever seen a prettier one, and Miss D——, who manages it, has a real genius for arrangements. Each time we go by there is some lovely new color-scheme in the window: the gleam of blue-glass candlesticks and bottles, silver-resist lustre against a background of deep, soft rose, or the ruddy, gold-flecked crimsons of Bohemian decanters and goblets. She is forward-looking, too, one of the first dealers to go in for ship models; and now she has turned her collecting attention to figureheads — her cellar storeroom is full of quaint seventeenth- and eighteenth-century carved wooden shapes, allegorical ladies and piratical men. I admired but did not buy them. Much as I love the ocean, they have no place in my little house in the hills, a hundred miles away from the nearest seacoast. But I am sure they are going to have a great vogue, and certainly she is one of the earliest in the field. And I saw — and coveted for friends who are amateurs at this gently domestic art — a pair of tinsel pictures, gorgeous peacocks sitting in a bower of improbable flowers. The backgrounds were white, and while the designs had less unity than most of those I have observed in America, still they were gay and artless and really quite decorative. They are the only ones I have seen in England; perhaps they are a rarer expression here than at home.



The pink lustre "house-design" creamer and two of my cups and saucers.



What I did buy was some very pretty pink lustre for fifteen shillings: three cups and saucers and a graceful creamer, patterned with the familiar house-design, — I'm sure mine shows a thatched-roof cot with a yew tree on one side, a larch on the other, — and my cups are to go with five other charmers I bought at Cirencester, while the creamer I am taking home to friends who have a little white house which very much resembles, barring the thatch, the rosy one that adorns the jug's plump sides.

But all these purchases are as nothing to my luck at the Caledonian Market. You know how I love rag-fairs! Well, this is far and away the best I have ever seen, higher priced than the *marché aux puces* in Paris, but with many, many more things to long for, and to add to your heart and home. England will always hold greater advantages for an American collector than France ever can; its art is more related to our lives.

I have heard about this market for ages, and I meant to go two years ago, but John was so very ill when we were last in London that I never got there. And then, this time, I discovered to my chagrin that I did n't know where it was — a bit of information I could n't acquire at my lodgings, for I am in a very bourgeois group. Therefore I asked an obliging "bobby," so tall and so good-looking that if the policeman from Badgery was anything like that I don't wonder Cinderella fell in love with him. He

politely corrected my desire to call it the "Cumberland Cattle Market," and mentioned the appropriate bus to take, — the Piccadilly Tube really is better, — and I arrived safely the next Friday morning so very early that the vendors were just unpacking their wares. Lucky for me: all the clans of the dealers are gathered at ten o'clock, and if you go later the best things are likely to have been picked up. It's an immense place, this fenced-in, cobblestoned square, not so large as the *marché* but less straggling and decidedly cleaner — although at the end of an exhausting day I always feel that I'd gladly exchange stones for dirt, or even mud. All this in spite of my childhood's training in Boston, where no sinner ever needed to make penitential pilgrimage with peas in his shoes — it was enough to walk along the disciplining streets.

I think fortune was with me that first day, for almost at once I saw a lovely sampler that I bought for you, Madeleine. I don't suppose it is anything like so valuable as the one that the Helen-and-Warren lady gave you, but I feel very proud of my luck. It is one of those long and narrow strips of the early eighteenth century, fourteen inches in length by seven and three quarters in width. The workmanship — I don't see why I should n't write "work-womanship" — is exquisite and fine, quite as even on one side as on the other, and the gentle colors of the silk glow against the deep *écru* of the linen. It is a



Two hundred years old, softly colored, and beautiful as an exemplar of exquisite stitchery. A real rag-fair triumph!

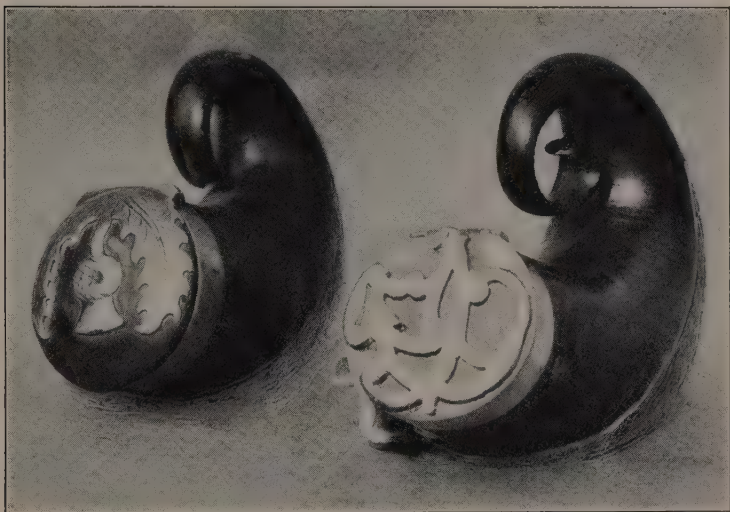




A delicate little scissored head, touched with gold penciling and framed in old gilt.



real exemplar of stitchery, with its various alphabets and crowns and hearts, — this last motif is rare on English samplers, — and I love the formal cross-



Old Scotch snuff-mulls, made from cows' horns and decorated on the lids with silver.

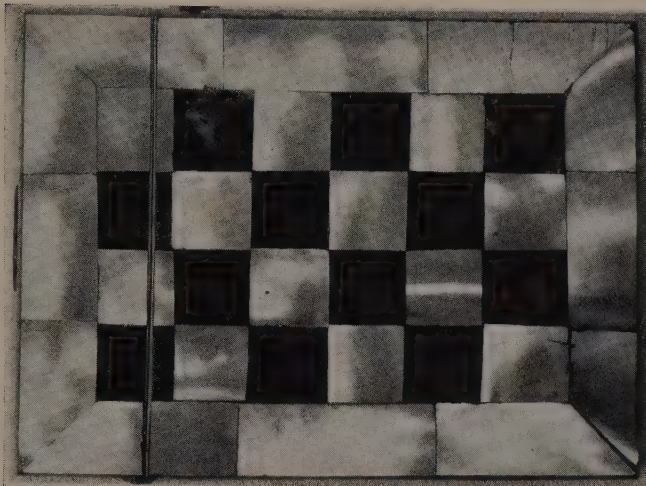
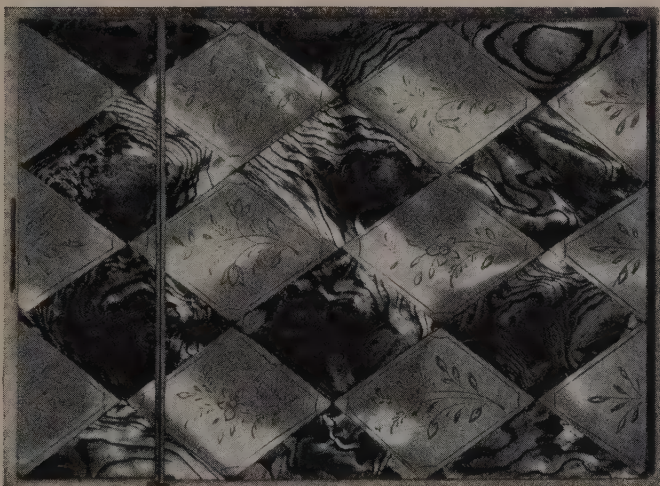
stitched birds flanked with punch-work crowns, and the simple verse: —

Lord give me wisdom to direct my ways.  
I beg not riches neither length of days.

Also I esteem the modest signature, “E. G., Born August the 6th in the Year of Our Lord 1725, Aged 15.” Two hundred years old, you see, Madeleine, and all this age and beauty for only ten shillings. But do be careful! Not that I saw any fakes, but practised

rag-fair collectors tell me that they abound: that dealers sell printed squares of linen concealed under dusty glass, or offer to the unsuspecting coarse modern works skillfully "fried" to a becoming brownish tint. And, oh, my dears, be wary of silhouettes! I have had terrible frauds offered me here, the worst of all two profiles deliberately copied from Mrs. Nevill Jackson's book, and painted on the reverse side of the glass. And one was an Edouart! Did you ever hear of such a travesty?

Still, I did find a darling shade — a little scissored head, delicately touched with gold penciling, and with the bust-curve very much in the Hubard manner. It was framed in old gilt, altogether a great bargain for two shillings, and at first I thought I would give it to you, Reggie. But then at a neighboring stall I saw such an attractive bit of time past — an old Scotch snuff-mull; and, while I know that snuff-taking is not one of your deplorable habits, I just had to get it for you. A dealer had offered six shillings for the mull a moment before but was refused, and I was more than willing to pay the eight that were asked for it. It is only the curlycue-ing tip of a cow's crumpled horn, banded with a metal strip on which is engraved the name, P. McIntyre, while upon the lid a silver thistle is set in curving leaves; but I liked it so much that immediately I felt an irresistible urge to find another for you. And I did, just a few stalls farther down, this time not



Two pretty cardcases; one picked up in Warwick, the other at the Caledonian Market.



quite so engaging, but rather larger, three and a half inches long, and with twisted scrolls forming the lid design. Pray regard these mulls as ornamental rather than useful, and put them beside the little inlaid snuffbox that Madeleine's aunt sent her from Paris.

Oh, there were so many things that I saw — and wanted. My next purchase was a pretty early-Victorian cardcase, a checkered pattern of mother-of-pearl and tortoise shell, that I bought for six shillings. You know I've gone pleasantly mad over these dainty trifles that our grandmothers used to carry when they sailed out in billowing skirts to pay a round of calls, and this is my seventeenth — every one quite individual and different. And then I found something that I had never seen before, a pair of pin-pricked pictures. I had read of them, naturally, and knew that some authorities attributed their origin to seventeenth-century France, others to eighteenth century England, and, equally, I realized how rare they were. Mine are quite flattish profiles with no raised cheek-contours such as the more elaborate ones show, but they caught my fancy at once, the man's figure particularly; he struts forward so gayly, sword in hand, and his costume is so bright with its gilt epaulets, its green sash and scarlet lapels and collar outlined in tinsel. The woman's dress is less ornamental — just a green ribbon on her hat, gilt filigree trimming her diamonded petticoats, and colored flowers in her outstretched basket. They are

framed, rather coarsely, in black passe-partout; the backgrounds are black, also, and I should date the work somewhere in the 1780's. Of course I wanted them — badly; but the difficulty was that I had started for the market with a little less than two pounds in my purse — a sum that would, very nearly, have bought up the whole Paris flea-fair — and I had only money enough to get home. I made the dealer swear to save them for me, and Alicia and I hurried away to South Kensington, swallowed a hasty luncheon, cashed an American Express check, and dashed back again as fast as the tube would take us. Later I felt rather foolish when I discovered that in the round building in the centre of the market there were several banks: Barclay's and Lloyd's and the National Provincial, where I perfectly well could have secured my money and saved my energies.

I don't know what I lost by my folly, but, after I had paid the dealer a pound for my pictures, I wandered away in search of new worlds to conquer, and found them in a shabby little flat-on-the-ground stall. At first glance, nothing but old clothes there; then, poked away behind a pair of trousers, I spied the prettiest pewter teapot I have ever seen. It is rather like one that Paul Revere made in 1789, but since pewter always lagged a little behind silver models, I place it somewhere nearer the end of the century. The vertical panels are beautifully engraved, and the lid, with its yellowing ivory knob,



My gallant gentleman; an excellent example of eighteenth-century pinpricked work. There are vivid notes of color in the costume, touches of green, scarlet, and gold set against the white.





The lady is charming, though less gay.



bears a pattern of classic simplicity. Five shillings was a trifle for it, but the woman seemed completely satisfied when I paid her price without hesitation; I think they expect most people to haggle.

That's all for my first day's shopping at the rag-fair, but don't you agree with me that it was a good one? Since then I have been out twice: once on a Tuesday, when I found nothing at all; the antiquity-dealers usually make Friday their day, though the rest of the fair goes on just as usual. I could have bought dresses or gloves or oilstoves or linoleum for the kitchen floor. It has quite the same relation to London as the *marché aux puces* has to Paris; it is where all the poor people shop. But, oh, it is so infinitely less gay! There are no merry-go-rounds or swings or fortune-tellers' booths; no flower-vendors saunter by selling bunches of pansies or violets, and nobody hums little snatches of old songs; there's just a sprinkling of wheezy accordions and squeaky violins. Maybe it's because it's so piercingly cold; I know I'd find it hard to be blithe and merry in such weather. Some of the dealers have small braziers of charcoal in front of their stalls, and I assure you it's a temptation to linger in their neighborhood. Instead we buy roasted chestnuts, and first we warm our hands on their steam, and then we eat them. And Alicia insisted on having an apple fritter, hot and smoking. She gave me a bite, and it really was very good; besides, the market is so much cleaner

than the *marché* that we thought we might take a chance.

On the Friday following I had more fortune. I bought another cardcase for five shillings, rosy nacre with little crosswise etchings, a papier-mâché blotter-case, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, for three; a second teapot, plump and domestic-looking, for seven; and for four shillings a mug with purplish transfer-printings of Napoleon's coronation, which the dealer tried to convince me was an English scene of George the First's reign. But best of all are my little Staffordshire swans, cottage pieces which are actually inkwells. Apparently the birds have abandoned their native element, for they are sitting ashore on a wreath of green leaves. And they have very pink wings, and very red bills, and, here and there, adorning strips and bands of lustre. I love them, and I prize them far beyond the two and six they cost. They are perfect ducks!

I hope you are not yet tired of my rag-fair enthusiasms; I have further counsel to bestow. First, I should go early and often, thereby catching the most desirable worms; second, if you are wise you will carry a bag. Then when your hands are frozen lumps of ice, encased in treacherous gloves, you won't drop your treasures and shatter them to smithereens on the cobblestones. And, if I did n't decide at once upon a purchase, I'd mark the place where I'd seen it; the fair is a vast labyrinth, but an ordered one,



Two pewter teapots from the Caledonian Market. The lower one is my pride and joy, very much like a silver piece made in 1789 by Paul Revere.



and all the lanes are numbered. If you do this you won't have the least difficulty in finding your way back once your mind *is* made up. Still, most important of all, I think, is taking the dealers' names and addresses; so often, you know, they have little shops in the outlying districts, and they bring only a small part of their wares with them on Fridays. I believe in luck, you understand, but I also have great faith in methodical energy.

By all this "miriation" you can tell how much we have been enjoying London. And our pleasures have not been confined to collecting, either. November, apparently, is the time for holidays: Guy Fawkes' Day, Lord Mayor's Day, Armistice Day, we rejoiced in them all. I think we must have subsidized every "Guy" from Knightsbridge to Earl's Court; "highway robbery" I heard one shopkeeper describing it, but to us it was so amusing and so new, that whenever a little boy sidled up and said, "Will you spare a penny for the guy, lady?" we always pleased to remember the fifth of November, and handed over our coppers most ungrudgingly. Around Piccadilly I noticed that the children were blacking their faces, making guys of themselves; I wonder if the good old custom is deteriorating?

I do wish we might have seen more of the Lord Mayor's procession. We hurried to the City and tried in vain to find a place of vantage, but the crowds were so dense that only the outriders, the tops of the

rumbling gilt chariots, and the powdered, cocked-hatted heads of the coachmen came into sight. But even that glimpse was worth while, for they looked as if they had stepped straight out of a Perrault fairy-tale.

And I never shall forget Armistice Day. We started early, but evidently all London had started earlier, and we could n't get anywhere near the Cenotaph. It was raining, too; the streets glistened with the wet, and the policemen's capes and the few umbrellas that prudent folk had brought shone as if they had been varnished. But neither of us regretted the long wait, our surroundings symbolized so much: gray sky, tall gray buildings, the magnificent pile of Westminster rising at our left, Big Ben tolling out those mighty strokes, and then the intense hush, broken only by the startled whirr of a myriad pigeons.

Alas, that the Royal Family returned to their various palaces by another way; Alicia was desolated at having missed the Prince. As Ted Davis wrote in one of his stories, she, together with several million other young women, cherishes him as a sort of beau ideal. And so, I may add, do I!

Good-bye for the moment; it's time for us to get ready to go to Charlot's Revue. Besides, I mean to regard this letter as what our old North Country women call "knittin'-work," picking it up now and then to confide my adventures to you.



Swans that did n't turn back into ugly ducklings but into inkwells; Staffordshire, of course, and useful as well as ornamental.



*November 20, 1925*

Imagine us sitting comfortably at home, toasting ourselves in front of our gas fire. Outside there is a thick, chilly, yellow cotton-wool fog, not a bad one at all, I am assured, but quite enough to convince me of what London weather could do if it really tried. We went out this morning to change our books, and the smoky damp got into my eyes till I wept unwilling tears, and into my throat till I coughed and coughed, and wished I had followed the example of one or two hardy old ladies we met who had tied scarves over their mouths. We could see only a few steps in front of us, and I know I should have been lost and have wandered for hours if my efficient daughter, who has a real flair for direction, had n't taken me by the hand, and led me safely back.

Indoors it's pleasant enough; there's the glow of the fire, a great cluster of golden chrysanthemums splashes sunlight over the wall, and I have ranged my pin-pricked pictures and two of the Edouarts I bought at Gloucester on the high white mantel. Altogether, we feel very homely and comfortable, shut in by the tumultuous privacy of fog, and I have been adding to this domestic illusion by polishing pewter. When we were at Cowes an Englishman we met, an accomplished amateur of old silver, recommended a plate powder to me, and it is excellent, much better than anything I have used in America. He told me that he always spent his Sunday morn-

ings — after early Celebration, for he is a good Churchman — shining his Queen Anne and early Georgian treasures, and I can understand his pleasure; already my humbler metal glows, and catches velvety black shadows in its curves. I know how to clean the inside of my teapots, too. Nelly, the friendly girl who sold me my ale glass, gave me an infallible method. You fill the pot with clear, warm water, put a lump of washing soda inside, change the water daily, and in a very short time all the old tea-stains will be gone and it will be as clean as a whistle. I shall try the receipt as soon as I get home.

Thinking back a little, I want to tell you that Charlot's Revue was, as always, delightful; I'd rather see it than a dozen Ziegfeld Follies. I missed Beatrice Lillie; Maisie Gay, clever and amusing as she is, can't hold a candle to her. But the Aubrey Beardsley Masque was the loveliest thing — in its way as fantastically beautiful as that gossamer and moonbeam "Kiss in Xanadu." And we have been hearing some wonderful music: Friedmann, and Guiomar Novaes in a straight Chopin programme, and Kreisler playing in Albert Hall to the greatest audience I have ever seen. In between, of course, I have antiqued, and gone to the Museum, and bought a few things for Alicia, and, after hours of anguished searching, found a hat for myself. I don't know whether a bobless head lies uneasily, but I am convinced that it's frightfully hard getting a crown for

one! And, speaking of hats, Michael Arlen's new play has set a decided fashion. Wherever you go, wherever there are crowds, you will see countless little green hats nodding about. "There's glory for you!"

And I have found lots more shops, several in Chelsea where the prices are n't so high as I had been led to believe, and I saw some bargains; a scattering few at South Kensington, and in Kensington itself three very good ones. Valentines at the first; at the second, old oak chests and presses and dressers, chiefly from Wales; at the third, everything: silhouettes and samplers and stencils, carved ivories and laces, small satinwood tea-caddies, and mirrors which might have reflected the faces of the lovely ladies who once dwelt here. For the cottage is as old as Queen Anne's day, and in it lived some of her maids of honor; it may be that the peerless Beatrix Esmond drank tea, just as I did, in the paneled parlor, low-ceilinged and warm with fire-light and lamplight — although, of course, her brown beauty would have been illumined by the pointing flames of tall wax tapers. Such a pleasant afternoon it was! I sat in an old chair, and sipped my tea from a porcelain cup, and ate Yorkshire gingerbread (I am to have the rule for it), and petted the plump tiger pussy, who balanced himself precariously on a brass trivet very like one I had admired at Carisbrooke Castle.

There were memories, too, of another queen, the virtuous Adelaide whose caps the old ladies in Cranford used to copy. I could have bought her lace handkerchief for thirty-five shillings, but my heart was given to a silhouette group, a shadowy family painted with great charm, that I shall get if my wandering remittances ever reach me. Even two pounds ten is a serious matter now, for the other day I dealt my collecting allowance a heavy blow by spending four guineas on two profiles that a Bath dealer had sent down for my inspection. They were so good that I could n't refuse them — I ached enough at having to relinquish a gilt-framed pair of Miers, in his early Leeds manner, which were twice as much. But I have none quite like the ones I bought, convex glass ovals painted on the reverse side, the heads, therefore, casting their own shades on the plaster backing. They are well framed in pearwood, with inner rims of gilt, and brass roses to hold the rings, and both were sent me as Rosenbergs. But only one is the work of that distinguished silhouettist; I took them to the Victoria and Albert for comparison with the Desmond Coke collection, and the one with the label, "Rosenberg, Profile Painter to their Royal Highnesses, Prince and Princess of Wales, Duke and Duchess of York, No. 14 [*obliterated*] Bath," shows just the same definite black that this artist always employed, although Captain Coke's example has no touch of

gilding, while the epaulet on my dear officer's shoulder is beautifully fine and lustrous. The other profile, unmarked, might be by Charles; the hair has n't the same cloudy delicacy, however, and the brownish-black tone reminds me, rather, of Lea of Portsmouth. It lingers somewhere between the two methods, and I cannot credit it with any certainty to either silhouettist.

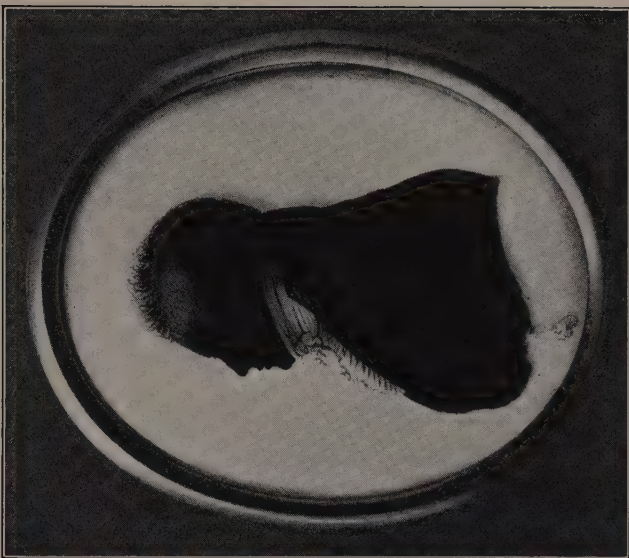
I am glad I love them as much as I do; they compensate me for my enforced economy, for, truly, we *are* terribly hard up, and I have solemnly sworn not to send home for any more money. Alicia and I have been discussing whether it would n't be well to pin reminding proverbs up on the wall — "A penny saved is a penny earned," "Take care of the pennies and the pounds will take care of themselves," and so on through a long list of thrifty maxims. But for some people our coppers shall continue to pour out in an uninterrupted stream: for the pavement-artists and the hurdy-gurdy men; many of them still wear service-badges, and the sign, "No Dole, no Pension," hangs as a millstone about their necks. Yesterday, too, I saw such a pathetic couple, an old man and his wife out in the bitter cold near the Earl's Court Station, their tiny, cracked barrel-organ whispering just the thread of a tune — "Then You'll Remember Me." Age and poverty and every hope gone, a trinity of sorrows! I don't care how much Conservatives rail against

the Dole; in some cases it may be abused, but without it England would be in misery!

*November 26*

More adventures, Reggie and Madeleine! I have been to the Petticoat Lane Fair that is held every Sunday morning in the Whitechapel district. Such a jam! It took me literally hours to make the rounds of the market, and even then I am afraid I passed by some streets. It is a much less happy hunting-ground than the Caledonian; my chief impression is cheap clothes and jellied eels, "something to eat and enjoy, my lads," being offered for sale. But I did chance upon one pushcart that was worth while: the man and his son sell old silver, smaller pieces for the most part: knives and forks and spoons, though I did see two quite stunning cups. Their prices are not according to age or workmanship, but go by weight and the current value quoted in the daily papers. Best of all, they are there not just Sunday alone, but every day of the week, and, if you will go then, you can avoid the awful crowd that pushes you along before it, and shop at leisure. I saw very sophisticated dealers buying there.

And I have met two sympathetic couples, friends of friends, who, like myself, are next-to-nothing collectors. The R——s live in the Adelphi quarter, so reminiscent of the great Duke of Buckingham and the brothers Adam, and their late-seventeenth-cen-



Two fine silhouettes, painted on convex glass, and throwing their own shadows on the plaster backings. The first by Rosenberg; the second, possibly, by Lea of Portsmouth.



tury apartment is full to overflowing with their bargains. I never liked pot-lids till I saw their charming and varied collection, and they tell me the most amazing tales of Lambeth puzzle-jugs picked up back of Paddington, and salt-glaze tea-pots unearthed in Battersea. Their great love is old faïence, but the C——s are more catholic and unexclusing in their tastes. Mrs. C—— and a friend of hers have recently started a very attractive shop in a mews off Piccadilly. “Hidden Treasure” is its name; don’t you think it sounds enticing? Talk about my luck! It’s as dust and ashes compared to hers.

Think of going to the Caledonian Market and pulling a rapier out of a rubbish heap — a princely blade, its hilt encrusted with black garnets and adorned with the Roi Soleil’s crest! And getting it for sixpence! It’s a haunted sword, too, — the one thing that makes me thankful this good fortune was hers, not mine, — for at dusk a tall, dark man in a long black cloak steals in as softly as drifting thistledown, and tries to pick up his rapier — and then vanishes.

Besides, there’s the tale of the portrait. Fancy attending an auction blessedly lacking in dealers, and paying two pounds ten for a fine gentleman who was painted in the lively Restoration days by Sir Peter Lely! It is up for sale now at Christie’s, and with the right kind of bidders — not the Ring —

will fetch hundreds. And Christie's reminds me that London is the only other place besides our Pennsylvania-Dutch district where you can go to as many as three auctions in one day. Indeed, I went to three in one afternoon: to Christie's where, earlier in the season, I could perfectly well have afforded to buy tables and chairs; to Forster's, where old silver and jewelry were going for a few notes of a song; and to a third gallery — the name I forget, and I have temporarily lost my paper memory — where the only really good thing was a small canvas by Le Sueur. I was tempted to buy a huge and fearsome copy of "The Stag at Bay" for you; I could have got it for seven shillings, a fraction of the frame's value, and it would very nearly have covered one whole wall of "Treetops"; but somehow I felt convinced that you would n't appreciate it.

After these delighting labors we went back to Hidden Treasure for tea, stopping en route to buy crumpets, which we browned in front of the gas fire. And what do you think we used for toasting-forks? Why, eighteenth century swords — quite in keeping, you see, and a most effective method of beating them into domestic pruning-hooks!

With such diversions our month has gone by like magic, and every now and then the collecting me laments at leaving London and all its pleasures and palaces. In two days more we sail, and I feel as if I were going away with half my work undone. And

yet I really am wild to get back. In the first of my stay I met a little woman at the Express Offices, and — Heaven forgive me — I almost snubbed her when she came up to me and said, “I’m so happy that I’ve just *got* to talk to somebody. I’ve been in Europe over a year, and to-morrow I’m going home! I’m going home!” Now I’d be more sympathetic with her, for I am longing for America, and I shall be happy beyond comparison to see my family and my cats and my white little cottage and all my friends!

Wish us a calm and prosperous voyage.

Yours sincerely, *very*,

ALICE

## IF I WERE YOU —

*"He who would bring home the wealth of the Indies must carry the wealth of the Indies with him."*

IF I were you — ah, what would n't I do if I, in your fortunate shoes, were going to England! First of all, I'd take the riches of India with me. Of course I'd travel light; who in the world wants to be bothered with luggage — hitch her chariot, not to a roving star, but to cumbersome, delaying trunks, soulless impedimenta that can keep you station-bound, forbid your visiting the loveliest country church, or walking down some green, romantic lane. Clothes sufficient for a decent respectability you can always buy; I speak with knowledge, for in time of stress and urgency I myself acquired lingerie of the stalwart Joanna Godden type at a little village shop very much resembling our own New English "corner stores" where you can purchase anything a guileless fancy dictates.

But the beauty of the riches of India is that they are as light as gossamer, that they fold away in the easy compass of your mind; no burden, only a constant joy. To go to an old country like England, endowed with the civilization of centuries, without knowing something of its history, its customs, its traditions, seems to me completest folly. Read and read

and reread before you go; you'll never regret it. All my life I have loved English books, and what England would have meant to me without Thackeray and Jane Austen and Dickens and Trollope I cannot imagine. But I wanted, *needed* so much more; in Wiltshire I longed for Aubrey — and lacked him; Fuller's *Worthies* would have embellished any county, and I cannot imagine more agreeable traveling companions than the two-hundred-odd numbers of the *Gentleman's Magazine* or Chambers's *Book of Days*, this last to look up the multitudinous saints who "pestered" the calendar. Why did n't I pack my mind full to overflowing before I left home?

All these are intangible things, however, and I proceed to more definite counsels. I should never, if I could help it, stay *en pension*; bed and breakfast is a much wiser arrangement to make. Naturally, in a tiny village like Bibury where there were just two inns — The Swan and St. Catherine's Wheel, the Wheel alluring but in name — gastronomic delights were perforce restricted. And yet, even there, I'd not tie myself to time again; I'd be free to wander over the hills and far away; you can always get back by candlelight, and always, too, there are little roadside taverns where you can stop for a lunch of bread and cheese and cold meat — good fare anyhow, and doubly so when flavored by hunger. Above all, don't bind yourself in London to three meals (four, counting tea) day after day, in the same room, watching the same

faces, and eating — I regret to say — very much the same sort of uninspired food.

There are not, of course, anywhere nearly so many interesting places to eat as in Paris, but every great city has its culinary charms if only you will look for them. We did n't search enough, hence my warnings; but I do assure you, my dear Honest Collectors, that when we did adventure, no hunting Mayor and Corporation ever more blithely hallooed "soho!" than did we. And I give you a little list compiled for me by a discriminating Hungarian who crossed with us, a man who had lived years in London, and who, I imagine from his emphasis, had suffered at pensions. All of them are what the French call *abordable*, and I only wish I could remember, and, remembering, add the name of the little Italian restaurant where the R——s, my *faïence* friends, took me to dinner — the food was delicious. Here they are, and may you enjoy them: The Rendez-Vous, Dean Street, Shaftsbury Avenue; Beguinot's Le Diner Francais, Old Compton Street, Cambridge Circus; Gobelins (for luncheons only), off Regent Street in a side street near the Piccadilly Hotel; The Savoy Grill, the Strand; Simpson's, the Strand near the Savoy Hotel; and the Trocadero Grill, Shaftsbury Avenue.

You see, I want to encourage you, but, even without these alleviations, you still would be richly rewarded. Indeed, I feel that I must plagiarize Henry of Navarre, and insist that London is worth a few bad

meals! I think I'd go there even if I had to exist on Brussels sprouts and British coffee, and more I cannot say. Don't, I beg you, drink coffee in England; otherwise you will too much regret your native land. On the other hand the tea is almost invariably excellent; it is no hardship to drink it for breakfast, and the great hotels — the Carleton, the Savoy, and Claridge's — serve afternoon tea with a finesse that I have never known in America. *Abordable*, too, for it is only three shillings.

Ah, there were so many things I enjoyed — and for nothing at all. When my tardy remittances were wandering in search of me, and my antique-ing funds were reduced to half a crown, I used to stroll through the Victoria and Albert Museum, and choose treasures I'd like to have in my own possession (the most glorified kind of window-shopping): a profile by the incomparable Mrs. Beetham in the Desmond Coke Collection; suave walnut chairs of good Queen Anne's day; a dozen gleaming Jacobite glasses from the cases given by that generous couple in Worcestershire; and it was only after a struggle and with real reluctance that I abandoned the Ardabil Carpet; too large, and, I fear, too magnificent for my little cottage. And I never came away without an added bit of knowledge: that the chintz in my dining-room was copied from an early nineteenth-century fabric; that E——'s charming quilt, which I once compared to César Cui's "Orientale," was of late Stuart workmanship;

that my pretty little cardcases may have had as ancestor an inro of gently blue mother-of-pearl, the colors of the sea at twilight.

Always, as in France, my memories mean more to me than the tangible things I bought; these a fickle destiny may sweep away, but my visions are mine forever. They are the river and sky that I bring back with me: London as we left it at dawn, a Wordsworth city wearing the beauty of the morning like a filmy, iridescent garment; misty roads in Gloucestershire and red-coated squires riding along with a pack of hounds trotting at their horses' heels — thank God I never saw a hunted fox! — the towering arches of old Malmesbury outlined against a burning September sky; and the gray Abbey Farm at Chale set in its peace of smooth lawns.

To me, also, "England may not be unfitly compared to a house, not very great, but convenient; and the several Shires may properly be resembled to the *rooms* thereof." I can wish you no happier fortune than to walk through them all!

ALICE VAN LEER CARRICK

## APPENDIX

### ANTIQUITY SHOPS

*L—— is just back from two marvelous months in England, and last night we talked late and late, comparing her luck and my luck, and singing the praises of all the little shops where we found our fortune, and all the kindly dealers who sold us our bargains. And since you, my Collecting Friends, who have traveled with me in print, may want to know just how and where to go, I lay this list at your feet with as many good wishes for your success as there are shops and dealers in it. You may not find just what L—— and I did, but, in England, luck is bound to be yours: tangible history, the beautiful symbols of the past, spread before you for your choosing; ever and ever so much more that will be related to your American homes than you can hope to find in France, though truth compels me to admit that the prices will be somewhat higher. And just one word of counsel: take as much knowledge and taste with you as you can. I found dealers infinitely obliging and assiduously helpful just because I understood and appreciated. Even though I bought but little. So often they said to me, “But, Madam, it is a pleasure to show you these things — you know and care for them.” Also, I was very polite. Dealers do not esteem their own compatriots who scornfully stroll in, finger the antiquities, and remark that there is nothing interesting in the shop, or that the prices are vastly too high, but I do assure you that Americans of this lofty demeanor are a great deal more disliked! You should always carry with you that gentle peace supposed to be so efficacious in silencing envious tongues. This is my advice, and here are my lists. Ponder them well, and may good fortune wait upon expenditure!*

#### COWES

#### The Isle of Wight

Netten and Netten: High Street and Arcade

I bought my Pembroke table and my angle chair with the tall, completing comb from them. And I wanted much more that they had, for they are auctioneers rather than dealers, and their rooms are usually full of treasures at most reasonable prices.

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### NEWPORT

William Kent: 16 & 18, St. James Street

Another auctioneer — he calls his place "The Star Auction Mart." I bought my pretty little light-stand and my telescope candlesticks from him. It is always worth hunting through his medley, for furniture and oddments are constantly being brought to him for sale.

Harry Shepard: 34a, Holyrood Street

To his vocation of coal merchant he adds the more agreeable task of selling old books and prints, as his card reads, "Things unique — things antique."

### RYDE

E. W. Field: 28, Union Street

A delightful place, kept by one of the descendants of John Field, the great profilist. It is supposed to be Queen Mary's favorite shop of the Island, and certainly it is full of beautiful things. Rather high priced from an Isle of Wight point of view, but certainly not from an American.

Mundell's: 4, Cross Street

Rather high priced, too, and with bibelots rather than furniture, but occasionally you stumble on a bargain. My little Faith, Hope, and Charity cup and saucer were bought here.

### GODSHILL

Mrs. Beryl F. Dupigny: Hill Cottage

Delightful and charming and picturesque, all at once, and its chatelaines also merit the first two adjectives. You read, perhaps, the story of Hill Cottage in the *May House Beautiful*; if you did, you assuredly will want to see the treasures Mrs. Dupigny and Miss Mossop have collected. Everything, I believe, is for sale, and you'll break the Tenth Commandment in each room.

### SHANKLIN

Mrs. E. Spencer: Old Village Museum

The best place for silhouettes, old prints, and general small things on the Island. I bought my Enoch Wood profiles, my salt box, and my sixpenny fashion-prints here.

Thomas Crone: in Shanklin itself, not the Old Village

He is really a house-furnisher, but occasionally he has lovely old glass and odd bits of china well worth buying, especially since his prices are moderate.

## VENTNOR

## J. Simmonds: 23, Albert Street

On the whole the cheapest place on the Island. I bought my Taglioni silhouette, my Georgian urn, and my loveliest papier-mâché cardcase from this pleasant dealer. All the collectors hereabouts speak well of him.

## S. Tuddenham &amp; Son: 4, Victoria Street

A complete hodgepodge of new and old, principally new, but here and there you will glean, for very little, pretty bits of the past.

## O. Bastien: Trinity Road

I bought nothing here, and thought the prices a little high, but collectors told me that he always expected to come down from the first sum he mentioned. Occasionally, especially in the spring, he has very good odd pieces of furniture.

## YARMOUTH

## Harry Lee: "The Spinning Wheel"

Here I bought nothing, but I thought some of the pieces very lovely, particularly a Hepplewhite sideboard with candle slides at either end, suavely inlaid, charming rather than pretentious, and only fifty pounds.

## Southampton

## J. A. Blanchard: 111, High Street

Here I bought my walnut cabriole angle chair for eight pounds ten, and I also saw several other pieces I should have liked to own. The prices all were reasonable, and it was to this dealer that I entrusted the crating of my furniture and getting my consular invoices.

## Winchester

## The Wykeham Galleries: 10, The Square

This shop is owned by Mr. Colson, the gentle old man who used to invite me to sit beside his fire and drink a glass of sherry while he read me his little grandson's letters. He is absolutely reliable, and his prices are not high.

## The Treasure Chest, Arthur J. Sharpe: 77, Parchment Street

Where I bought my silhouette album for a pound. This dealer had an interesting stock, always something I wanted.

## A. W. Tricker: 64, Parchment Street

I bought my classic group silhouette from him, and I noticed

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several good chairs and tables. Mr. Tricker was formerly a ducal butler — or so the story goes — and he still has an air of benignant aristocracy.

M. W. Castle: 80, High Street

Very good for small things; some especially desirable glass. I bought my Victoria and Albert plate here, also my two mugs.

E. J. Spicer: 27, St. Thomas Street

This was his address when I was in Winchester, but I have heard that he has moved to Parchment Street. He has lovely, odd things: pictures, hangings, and so on, but the charms of his conversation are even greater; to hear him talk is to feel as if you were listening to another *Quinney's*. And you must be sure to meet his obliging Oriental son-in-law, who adores showing Americans over Winchester, and who really knows ever so many queer little hidden-away places that the casual tourist is likely to miss, though, occasionally, you will find his historical information warring with your guidebook.

"Quinney's," D. J. H. Hatchwell: 42, High Street

A pretty place, though with no connection whatsoever with Mr. Vachell's book. Prices rather high from an English point of view — not from ours.

The Old Rectory, Thomas & Company: 2, Chesil Street

I liked the furniture, but not the overcomplimentary youth who showed it to me. Still, the prices are decidedly higher here than at the other Winchester shops, and I'd look around first before buying.

G. R. East: Eastgate Street

The fascinating "pokey" shop I found as the High Street swings into the London Road. It is really a secondhand shop, but if you hunt around you can find amazing bargains in small things, and sometimes very good furniture.

### Salisbury

Charles Scamell: 23, High Street

Prices very moderate; I bought my five-slat yew chair from this dealer. His seventeenth- and eighteenth-century pieces are always bargains because his chief interest seems to be collecting early-Victorian furniture for his son, who has a shop in San Francisco.

A. M. Goldsworthy: 50, High Street

I bought nothing here, but I remember thinking the selection good, and the prices very fair.

**Mullins: High Street**

I have lost my paper memory, but the shop is on the corner opposite Goldsworthy's, on the right-hand side as you go into the Cathedral Close. Decidedly the shop *chic* of the town; lovely things, but with higher prices.

**H. Simmonds: 29 & 31, High Street**

A bookshop, but this dealer always has lovely old prints for sale. I bought my "Paysanne de Gueldre" from him.

**Henry L. Bates: 18 and 20, The Canal**

Books as well as antiques; I bought my early eighteenth-century map here, and L—— has just come back with a delightful tea caddy that she found at this shop.

**E. Summers: 3, Winchester Street**

A splendid place to poke about; lots of next-to-nothing bargains. Here I bought my Liverpool transfer tea set for forty-five shillings and my slat-back armchair with spool turning for thirty-five.

## Bath

**Walpole Brothers: 16, Old Bond Street**

The first of my three favorite shops in Bath, and kept by one of the wisest, most kindly men it has ever been my good fortune to meet. To know him is really a liberal education. His collection is beautiful, his prices are reasonable, and he is completely to be depended upon.

**The Wite and Blak Shoppe, Captain E. F. Boulton: 38, Walcot Street**

Another favorite dealer. Entirely reliable, excellent taste, and, what will appeal to a middling purse, with lots of small pretty things to buy. I got my arm-Windsor and one of my pretty card-cases from him.

**The Pickwick Curio Stores, Alfred Angell: 42a, Broad Street**

My third chosen dealer. Charming small things and even more charming small prices. An interesting setting, too, for the shop occupies part of the old Saracen's Head Inn, where Dickens wrote his *Pickwick Papers*.

**The Gift House: Quiet Street**

*All profits given to charities.* I stress this phrase because here you feel so utterly confident of genuine furniture and bibelots. Besides, the prices are most moderate, — I got my mother-of-pearl inlaid Victorian chair here for twenty-five shillings, — and the young man in charge is very agreeable and obliging.

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**James Barter:** 16, Green Street

A small shop, but well worth visiting; principally smaller things and bibelots, easy to carry with you, and not at all high.

**"Antichita":** 6, North Parade

I bought nothing here, but I thought the collection interesting and the prices very fair indeed.

**E. A. Holloway:** 5, 6, & 7, Orange Grove

I longed for, but did not buy, entirely on account of a flattish purse, two charming Chippendale chairs, respectively four and five pounds apiece.

Three good "pokey" shops: Mrs. L. Palmer, 28 & 30, Walcot Street; Mrs. Rowse, Broad Street; and A. Frost & Son, 7, Dial's Lane, Sawclose

**Mallet of Bath:** Milsom Street

Really a climax, for it is quite the grandest shop I have ever seen. Don't go unless you have a lot of money to spend, for you will be tempted beyond resistance. I have never seen so many lovely things all at once, and they are worth all that you will have to pay for them. Moreover, the eighteenth-century setting is incomparable.

### Chippenham

**Tudor House, J. H. Pearce:** 53, Causeway

On the whole, the cheapest place I found in my travels. I missed a set of Transition Hepplewhite chairs in fruitwood (pear, I think), which were only sixty shillings for the six, but I found my delightful inlaid barometer for three guineas.

**W. G. Powell:** 28, Park Lane

Very good for smaller things: lustre, cardcases, odd bits of china, and stenciled trays.

**E. Smallcombe:** Market Place

Mostly new furniture, but occasionally a piece of antique furniture strays in, and can be acquired very cheaply indeed.

### Gloucester

**Lea & Company:** 60, Northgate Street

The shop where I bought my six Edouart silhouettes. A great deal of furniture, some of it rather good, but on the whole the prices are high.

W. H. White: College Court

Almost opposite the house where Simpkin lodged with the old Tailor of Gloucester. The Windsor chairs were inexpensive, but the china and glass and silhouettes all were rather forbidding.

H. Wager: 40a, London Road

Just a general furniture and secondhand shop, but I remember some charming gilt mirrors (Empire) very cheap, and I'd always take the chance of looking there.

### Cheltenham

C. Mitchell: 7, Winchcombe Street

Very good furniture and china; not high.

W. J. Staite: 8, Bennington Street

Full of all kinds of miscellaneous bargains. I could have bought a much earlier and more charming copper urn for a shilling less than I paid at Ventnor.

H. O. Box: on the main shopping street

His card is unmarked, so my information goes no further than that it is midway down, on the left-hand side. A good place for smaller silver and odd trinkets.

### Cirencester

Ovens & Son: 45, Dyer Street

An auctioneer's warehouse, full of old and new. Prices middling. I got my pink lustre here.

W. H. Saunders

Another house-furnishing establishment, where good old things occasionally stray in.

Edmund C. Legg

An excellent place, but the prices correspond.

### Malmesbury

Joseph Wilkins: Oxford Street

A tiny shop very near the old Abbey. He is well known as a shrewd buyer, and usually has something worth while. I got my oak knife-box from him, also a Lowestoft cup and saucer and an inlaid snuffbox, all very reasonably.

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### Oxford

Cecil A. Halliday: 44, Broad Street

A wide range of choice, most things very good, and very reasonable prices.

Ye Antiquary, Archibald Graham: 41 & 48, High Street

L—— got a lot of things at this shop two years ago, and recommended it to me. I bought only cardcases, but they were lovely ones, and certainly you'll find antiquities to suit all tastes and most purses.

Chaundy & Smith: 38, High Street

Very good furniture at rather high prices, but only an empty purse made me hesitate.

E. R. Greening: 114, High Street

Very much the same; still, in both places the things are lovely. I rejoice to tell you that L—— has just bought that marvelous girandole mirror with the black eagle.

A. E. Godfrey: 50, St. Giles

Excellent bibelots, principally Oriental, though Mr. Godfrey has some interesting English china and glass, and pretty mother-of-pearl oddments.

E. Tyler-Jew: 2 & 3, Worcester Street

Attractive furniture, and prices not quite so lofty as on the High Street.

R. H. Lambourne: Gloucester Street

A "mixtry," but a good one; you can buy some antiquities for a song. Usually not much furniture except chairs and tables, but always a number of desirable small things antique.

H. W. Jones: 21, Gloucester Street

Really a joiner, but with good and inexpensive pieces of furniture every now and then.

Powell: Holywell Street

A great authority on oak; his restoration of Oxford's doors and panelings is a miracle in wood.

### Banbury

Taplin & Sons: near "The Cross"

Some things very good, and everything very cheap.

Ernest R. Faulkner: 15, Parson's Street

I liked this little shop, and I wanted very much more than I bought. Everybody speaks highly of this dealer.

### Stratford on Avon

Oliver Baker: 10, Chapel Street

Good furniture and pewter; however, I thought, in some ways, his prices were quite high. My big pewter bowl was a beautiful exception though, and I am told that he is in every way reliable.

A. Brown: 31, Birmingham Road

This shop I liked better; certainly it more nearly suited my poor but honest income. I bought my big Empire mirror with the bas-relief here, also my Leeds-ware sauce-dish.

There is another shop, too — but, ah, my treacherous memory! However, Mr. Brown can tell you; it is kept by a woman, and is on the left-hand side of a street leading to the railway station. Small things here: tea caddies and cardcases and bits of silver and inexpensive jewelry.

### Chipping Campden

G. Badham: High Street

The only shop I could find in this ancient town. His sign reads, "Cabinet Maker, Upholsterer, Cycle Agent and Repairer," and you stand the chance of getting sturdy pieces of peasant furniture, chairs and stools and corner cupboards, very cheap.

### Broadway

The Russell Workshops

Very near that lovely inn, The Lygon Arms, where you must be sure to stop for tea at least. You will find the antiquities interesting and moderately priced, and I am sure you will want to see the craft shop, too, for it is full of charming things.

### Warwick

H. H. Bray: 11a, Jury Street

The very first place I am going, with my pockets full of money, when next I am antique-ing in England. Not that the prices are high, but that there is so much that I want: clocks, tea caddies, stools, mirrors, glass candlesticks, fans.

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J. T. Goldie: 23, Jury Street

There are things I want here, too, and the old man and his daughter are very pleasant.

C. Grainger-Brown: 2, High Street

I bought nothing here, but L—— is enthusiastic about this shop, and I remember liking the furniture.

### London

Hidden Treasure, Mrs. Stewart Campbell and Miss Phyllis Bell: 14c, Mason's Yard, Duke Street, Piccadilly

The prettiest studio and the most charming people in all the world. And the prices are so cheap that American collectors open their eyes in wonder. You can't go wrong, for the taste is excellent, and the range is so wide, all the way from Armada chests to eighteenth-century French fans, that you are sure to find something you want.

Queen Anne House, The Misses H. & I. Woollan: Duke's Lane, Church Street, Kensington

Queen Anne's maids of honor are said to have lived here, and certainly the little, low-ceilinged house is charming. Some of the smaller pieces of furniture, but principally the little, lovely things: samplers, mirrors, tea caddies, snuff-boxes, and so on, are what you will find.

The Doll's House: 27a, Church Street, Kensington

Very good peasant furniture, chiefly seventeenth- and eighteenth-century oak from Wales. I believe the Queen buys here, too.

Esta Dickson: 123, Gloucester Road, Kensington, S. W.

Miss Dickson goes in for ship models and figureheads, but she has lovely other things: lustre and delightful glass.

Banks Sisters: 7a, Church Street, Kensington

A good place for valentines and interesting old books.

Albert Amor: 31 & 32, St. James Street

A very fine shop, where I was surprised to find I could buy excellent chairs for what would be a moderate price in America; I won't write "bargains," but assuredly full value for your expenditure.

The Eighteenth-Century Shop, Ada Peters: 154, Cromwell Road

You must not miss this place; it is where I bought my ale glass and lost the silver spoon. Besides, they are so kind here, and will take infinite pains to find anything you are looking for.

W. T. Hawkins: 27, Ebury Street, Victoria

I didn't buy here, but for the simple reason that my trunks were full and my purse was empty. One of the least expensive, worthwhile places that I found.

Lares & Penates: 50, Baker Street, Portman Square

An interesting place, though the prices are rather high. Still, it's decidedly worth a visit, and you won't have to worry about fakes.

A. Timms: 113, Sydney Street, Chelsea

A large stock, and I thought the prices fair.

F. Grimsdall: 37 & 51, Church Street, Chelsea

I find I have marked this card, "Somewhat snippy, but prices cheap."

G. R. Young: 203, King's Road, Chelsea

Excellent for small things; old jewelry and antique silver very reasonable, and I could have bought two pretty cardcases — duplicates, alas, of what I already had — for fifteen shillings.

Carlyle House, James Meryett: 253, King's Road, Chelsea

Again my note reads, "Very good stock, prices moderate."

Harry Armstrong: 322, King's Road, Chelsea

Here the prices were higher, but there was some good furniture.

Additional addresses given me by Mrs. Campbell and L——. Mrs. Campbell describes them as "nice, cluttery, poke-about shops."

Andrew Lush: 113, Church Street, Kensington

A quaint old fellow in a skullcap, who talks Ruskin to you while he shows you nice old silhouettes and bits of Chelsea and Bow. Better not go there if you are less than sixty-two years old, as he does not hesitate to call anyone younger a "barbarian."

The Kettle on the Hob: 50, Park Road, Upper Baker Street

A most attractive little shop, where Miss Edith Webb has very beautiful pieces of old oak and walnut at exceedingly low prices. She has lately been specializing in old Chinese pottery, too. Nothing could be more genuine than Miss Webb, unless it be her furniture.

Mrs. Crick: 128, Church Street, Kensington

The whole place is a-sparkle with glass. There is little that Mrs. Crick does n't know on her subject.

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The King Fisher, Mrs. Laing: Earl's Court Road, South Kensington  
A queer little place, all made of glass, and full of a jumble of china, prints, pottery, glass, samplers, and so forth; without rhyme or reason, system or order, but patient poking is often rewarded by the finding of a real treasure.

A. Lev: 99, Church Street, Kensington

I have often found some wonderful bargains here, and the proprietor is very naïve. Her chief stock is old silver and jewelry, but she also has beadwork and lace.

Mrs. Craven: 1a, Adam Street, Baker Street

She is a very charming woman, who writes for *The House Beautiful*, and has made of her house and home a most delightful shop, full of unusual old things at very reasonable prices.

MacGregor's: 8, Baker Street, Portman Square

I found here some beautiful old Lowestoft at quite jolly prices; also, a Tables-of-the-Law sampler, dated 1717, for a little over a pound, and some rare old Jacobite glasses.

Have you been to Mr. Spencer's in New Oxford Street, right opposite Mudie's?

I think his is quite the most satisfactory print shop in London. Excellent for silhouettes and valentines, too.

Law-Layton: Blandford Street, Baker Street

Good for old pewter, peasant furniture, and old wrought-iron.

The Caledonian Market

Take the Piccadilly Tube to Caledonian Road Station and, once in the street, turn to the right, walk down a block, turn to the right again, and follow the crowd. Friday is the great day, and you must go early; certainly you should be there by ten o'clock; then you'll have the pick of the bargains, or at least an equal chance with the swarming dealers. Here are some of the people I bought from, and, since most of them have little shops on the outskirts of London, — occasionally in London, too, — be sure to get their other addresses:

W. J. A. Norris, J. Eayres, A. Middleton, Mrs. McLoughlin, Mrs. Massih Hakim, Mr. Gottsman, Y. Griesiell, W. Smith.

The Petticoat Lane Fair

This Sunday morning fair in the Whitechapel district is well worth seeing once. If you are hurried or have just a week day, I am sure you can buy something from J. Raphael & Sons, whose address is 1, New Church Street, Buxton Street, Brick Lane, London, E. 1,

but who always have a barrow full of old silver and trinkets on Middlesex Street during the week and on Old Castle Street on Sundays.

May I add that the Englishman I met at Cowes told me that Queen's Road, Bayswater, was a happy hunting-ground; that you should go to the Main Street shops in Hampstead (I suspect it's really the High Street, but that's the way I've written it down) for bargains in old silver; and that Stevens, King's Street, Covent Garden, is a place always worth a visit from the poor but honest collector.

















